

**TOWARDS RESOLVING THE REFUGEE  
CAMP AS CAMPUS PARADOX:**

**EXPLORING COMPLEXITIES IN ATTAINMENT OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION BY REFUGEES ON THE THAI-BURMA BORDER**

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Chun (Tren) Hu.

The thesis is for the bright-minded students who call the Thai-Burma Border refugee camps ‘home’, members of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC) and the eclectic ensemble of educators and volunteers who have participated in the Australian Catholic University Thai-Burma Border programs since 2003. It is also for …

...The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect of the status quo. You can praise them, quote them, disbelieve them, glorify them or vilify them. But one thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They imagine. They heal. They explore. They create. They inspire. They push the human race forward (Elliott & Lemert, 2006, p. 53-54).<sup>1</sup>

## **A Psalm of Life**

*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

(1904, p. 3)

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,  
Is our destined end or way;  
But to act, that each to-morrow  
Find us farther than to-day.

---

<sup>1</sup> Taken from Apple Computer's 1998 'Think Different' campaign.

## **STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICATION**

I certify that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the thesis. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in whole or part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

Jason Paul SARGENT

Date

## **ABSTRACT**

This study applies social capital, communities of practice and blended learning as theoretical lenses for exploring complexities in the attainment of higher education by refugees on the Thai-Burma Border (TBB). The focus of the study is on the Melbourne Australia-based Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC) and the Australian Catholic University (ACU) TBB refugee students and academics who participated in three ACU programs (Diploma in Business, Certificate in Theology and Diploma in Liberal Studies) delivered on the TBB between 2003 and 2010.

A qualitative research strategy consisting of multiple embedded case studies, interviews and observations was used to elicit the views on attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB from members of the RTEC, the ACU TBB refugee academics and students, and from policymakers and practitioners with expertise in the design and deployment of in situ refugee higher education.

The study confirms that limited funding is the main factor for why in situ refugee higher education program delivery is so scant. The unique characteristics of refugee camps (remote location, extreme weather, inconsistent power and personal security concerns) also endorse the appropriateness of blended learning as the most effective model of education delivery whereby online learning by a refugee student is supported through brief intensive face-to-face (F2F) instruction and consultation by visiting academics. Community of practice characteristics of common concern, a shared repertoire and mutual engagement by members of the RTEC, ACU academic participants and the refugee students were also revealed through this study as vital components to the effective attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.

The study suggests that social capital amongst a series of actors, particularly the RTEC, ACU TBB academics and refugee students, supported by communities of practice within the RTEC, ACU TBB academic and refugee student cohorts, and a blended learning model of education delivery by ACU have combined to overcome complexities in attainment of higher education in a location of protracted forced migration crisis.

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John Donne (1624/1994) was correct, “*No man is an Island, intire of it selfe*” (p. 441). I could not have completed this thesis without the guidance and support of so many wonderful people. To Dr. Elizabeth Cassity, a special note of thanks for your academic supervision, expert insights and continued encouragement. We shared in the loss of our colleague, friend and my mentor Tren and your graceful assumption of main supervisory duties at that time was appreciated. Thank you to Professor/s Peter Goodyear, Peter Reiman and Michael Jacobsen and everyone at the University of Sydney’s Centre for Research on Computer Supported Learning and Cognition (CoCo) who provided a physical home to hang my Doctoral candidate-in-training hat for the first six months of my candidature and a virtual home thereafter. Special thanks to CoConuts (past and present) Dr. Carlos Gonzalez and Kashmira Dave for help with literature searches on blended learning and distance education and to Dorian Peters, Dr. Kate Davidson, Paul Kearney, Dr. Miriam Weinel, Dr. Susanna Mann and Nino Aditomo for making me feel right at home from ‘*the get go*’.

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Special mention of thanks must also go to Fr. Michael Smith, members of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC) and Mr. Duncan MacLaren, Coordinator of ACU's Refugee Program on the TBB for all manner of assistance and enthusiasm towards my research.

Without a doubt the highlight of this research project was meeting and spending time with the refugee students and their tutor [FM] at the ACU Thai-Burma Border study centre. My hope is that we meet again someday as scholarly colleagues. Until then I wish each and every one of you nothing but the best on your '*roads less travelled*'. Thanks also to all other participants who graciously found the time to contribute their thoughts during the data collection phase of my study. Your input has given this thesis its authenticity.

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To my parents, Dennis and Thel Sargent and brothers, Matthew and Michael, thanks as always for unconditional love and support, for letting me rant and rave about refugees for the previous decade, for all your encouragement throughout those years and especially for *never* asking me "*Why are you doing this?*" when the going got tough. Thanks also to Allison, Kyle, Dylan and Nicole. As for my two special girls, Huong and Kathleen, the love you provide is never taken for granted - I am truly blessed.

Finally, Robert Musil, in *The Man without Qualities* (1979) suggests that...

...In their basic relation to themselves most people are narrators... What they like is the orderly sequence of facts, because it has the look of a

necessity, and by means of the impression that their life has a ‘course’ they manage to feel somehow sheltered in the midst of the chaos (p. 436).

My thanks go to all and sundry that let me narrate on the topic of attainment of refugee higher education on the TBB, and as a result, helped shelter *me* in the midst of my own chaos.

*JS - May, 2012*

## ABBREVIATIONS

ACU	Australian Catholic University
AD	Anno Domini (translated as <i>In the year of (the/Our) Lord</i> )
AJCU	Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
APA	American Psychological Association
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AUSAID	Australian Aid
AVI	Australian Volunteers International
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CCSDPT	Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand
CIC	Community Internet Centers
CNED	Centre National D'enseignement à Distance (translated as <i>National Centre for Remote Teaching</i> )
CoP	Communities of Practice
CSLT	Community Service Learning Tracks
CTC	Community Technology Center
CTD	Convention Travel Document
DAFI	Deutsche Akademische Flüchtlings Initiative Albert Einstein (translated as <i>German Academic Refugee</i> )
DCoP	Distributed Communities of Practice
DET	Department of Education and Training
Dr.	Doctor

EDP	Energias de Portugal (translated as <i>Energies of Portugal</i> )
E-Journal	Electronic Journal
E-Learning	Electronic Learning
F2F	Face to face
Fr.	Father
GBS	Global Border Studies
GNP	Gross National Product
GSMA	Global System for Mobile Communications Association
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (translated as <i>German Society for Technical Co-operation</i> )
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
iNGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IRRI	International Refugee Rights Initiative
IRO	International Refugee Organisation
JC	Jesuit Commons
JC-HEM	Jesuit Commons - Higher Education at the Margins
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service
JTC	Jesuit Theological College
KED	Karen Education Department
KIP	Kasulu Internet Project
KNU	Karen National Union
KRC-EE	Karen Refugee Committee – Education Entity

LMTC	Leadership and Management Training College
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoI	Ministry of the Interior
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSW	New South Wales
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OLC	Online Learning Community
OUA	Open Universities Australia
PC	Personal Computer
PPE	Post-Primary Education
REVD	Reverend
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
RTEC	Refugee Tertiary Education Committee
RTG	Royal Thai Government
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SJ	Society of Jesus
SMP	Student Management Package
SUNYIT	State University of New York Institute of Technology
TBB	Thai Burma Border

TBBC	Thai Burma Border Consortium
UCD	User-Centerd Design
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
UOW	University of Wollongong
VET	Vocational and Educational Training
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WBEC	Web-Based Education Commission
WWW	World Wide Web
ZOA	Zuid Oost Azie (translated as <i>South East Asia</i> )

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .....	II
STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICATION .....	III
ABSTRACT.....	IV
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	VI
ABBREVIATIONS .....	IX
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	XIII
LIST OF TABLES .....	XVII
LIST OF FIGURES .....	XVIII
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY .....	2
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT .....	3
1.3 AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	6
1.3.1 <i>Aims</i> .....	6
1.3.2 <i>Objectives</i> .....	7
1.3.3 <i>Research Questions</i> .....	8
1.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY, METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS.....	9
1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	11
1.5.1 <i>Scope</i> .....	11
1.5.2 <i>Limitations</i> .....	11
1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH.....	13
1.7 OUTLINE OF THESIS .....	15
CHAPTER 2 - REFUGEES .....	17
2.1 REFUGEES .....	17
2.1.1 <i>Differentiating Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Migrants</i> .....	20
2.1.2 <i>Warehoused Refugees on Thai-Burma Border</i> .....	22
2.1.3 <i>Refugee Education: Overcoming an Unfreedom</i> .....	25
2.1.3.1 Refugee education along the Thai-Burma Border.....	31
2.2 CONCLUSION .....	35
CHAPTER 3 - REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	36
3.1 SOCIAL CAPITAL .....	37
3.1.1 <i>Categorising Social Capital</i> .....	45
3.1.2 <i>Dimensions of Social Capital</i> .....	48
3.1.2.1 Trust.....	49
3.1.2.2 Reciprocity .....	51
3.1.2.3 Norms or Values .....	53
3.1.3 <i>Social Capital and Refugees</i> .....	56
3.1.4 <i>Social Capital and Education</i> .....	57
3.2 COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE .....	59
3.2.1 <i>Indicators of Communities of Practice</i> .....	62
3.2.2 <i>Key Elements of Communities of Practice</i> .....	63
3.2.3 <i>Critiques of Communities of Practice</i> .....	65
3.3 BLENDED LEARNING .....	66
3.3.1 <i>The Antecedents of Blended Learning</i> .....	68
3.3.2 <i>The Process of Blending: Where, How and Why?</i> .....	72
3.3.3 <i>Blended Learning and Communities of Inquiry</i> .....	75
3.4 CONCLUSION .....	77

<b>CHAPTER 4 - METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>79</b>
4.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH.....	79
4.2 CASE STUDIES.....	80
4.2.1 <i>Embedded, Multiple Case Design</i> .....	82
4.2.1.1 Unit of analysis. ....	84
4.3 DATA COLLECTION .....	84
4.3.1 <i>Participant Recruitment and Sampling Techniques</i> .....	85
4.3.1.1. Participant recruitment.....	85
4.3.1.2. Judgement sampling. ....	86
4.3.1.3. Snowball sampling. ....	87
4.3.2 <i>Interviews</i> .....	87
4.3.2.1. Interview schedules. ....	88
4.3.2.2. Building rapport. ....	88
4.3.2.3. Interview participant summary. ....	90
4.3.3 <i>Online questionnaires</i> .....	91
4.3.3.1. Online questionnaire schedules. ....	92
4.3.3.2. Online questionnaire participant summary. ....	92
4.3.4 <i>Observations</i> .....	92
4.3.4.1. Field notes. ....	93
4.3.4.2. Observation schedules and participant summary. ....	94
4.3.5 <i>Data collection summary</i> .....	94
4.3.6 <i>Leedy's Data Gathering Principles</i> .....	95
4.3.7 <i>Ethics Implications</i> .....	98
4.4 DATA ANALYSIS .....	99
4.4.1 <i>Data Reduction</i> .....	100
4.4.1.1 Analysing 'within-case' data.....	100
4.4.2 <i>Data Display</i> .....	101
4.4.3 <i>Conclusion/Drawing Verification</i> .....	102
4.4.4 <i>Analysis Tools and Techniques</i> .....	102
4.5 DATA RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY .....	103
4.5.1 <i>Internal and External Validity</i> .....	103
4.5.2 <i>Generalisability</i> .....	105
4.6 CONCLUSION .....	105
<b>CHAPTER 5 - IN SITU HIGHER EDUCATION FOR REFUGEES ON THE THAI-BURMA BORDER: BARRIERS, CONSTRAINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>107</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	107
5.2 BARRIERS AND CONSTRAINTS .....	108
5.2.1 <i>Protocol for Identifying Barriers and Constraints</i> .....	108
5.2.2 <i>Funding</i> .....	112
5.2.3 <i>Security and Political Issues</i> .....	118
5.2.4 <i>Technical Issues</i> .....	123
5.2.5 <i>Mobility of Refugees</i> .....	124
5.2.6 <i>Lack of Willing Tertiary Education Institutions</i> .....	126
5.2.7 <i>Lack of Guidelines</i> .....	127
5.2.8 <i>Lack of Suitably Qualified Refugee Students</i> .....	128
5.2.9 <i>Other Issues</i> .....	131
5.2.9.1. Lack of awareness. ....	131
5.2.9.2. English language skills. ....	133
5.2.9.3. Socio-economic issues.....	133
5.2.9.4. Lack of collaboration. ....	134
5.3 ADDRESSING BARRIERS AND CONSTRAINTS .....	135
5.3.1 <i>Addressing Funding Issues</i> .....	135
5.3.2 <i>Addressing Security and Political Issues</i> .....	138
5.3.3 <i>Addressing Technical Issues</i> .....	141
5.3.4 <i>Addressing Refugee Mobility Issues</i> .....	143
5.3.5 <i>Addressing the Issue of a Lack of Willing Tertiary Education Institutions</i> .....	144

5.3.6 <i>Addressing the Issue of a Lack of Guidelines</i> .....	146
5.3.7 <i>Addressing the Issue of English Language Skills</i> .....	147
5.4 FINAL THOUGHTS BY POLICY-MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS .....	147
5.6 CONCLUSION .....	148
<b>CHAPTER 6 – THE REFUGEE TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (RTEC) .....</b>	<b>150</b>
6.1 INTRODUCTION .....	150
6.2 CASE 1.1 - GENESIS AND EVOLUTION OF THE REFUGEE TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (RTEC) .....	151
6.3 CASE 1.2 - SOCIAL CAPITAL OF THE REFUGEE TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (RTEC).....	157
6.3.1 <i>Trust and the RTEC</i> .....	158
6.3.2 <i>Categorising the Social Capital of the RTEC</i> .....	162
6.3.2.1. Approach of social capital of the RTEC. ....	163
6.3.2.2. Type of social capital of the RTEC. ....	166
6.4 CASE 1.3 - THE REFUGEE TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (RTEC) AS A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (CoP)....	168
6.4.1 <i>A Shared Passion or Concern</i> .....	169
6.4.2 <i>Mutual Engagement</i> .....	170
6.4.3 <i>Shared Repertoire</i> .....	171
6.5 DISCUSSION.....	172
6.5.1 <i>Significance of Involvement with RTEC and Contributing Towards the Attainment of Higher Education by Refugees on the TBB</i> .....	173
6.6 CONCLUSION .....	174
<b>CHAPTER 7 – THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY THAI-BURMA BORDER ACADEMICS.....</b>	<b>175</b>
7.1 INTRODUCTION.....	175
7.2 CASE 2.1 - SOCIAL CAPITAL OF THE ACU TBB ACADEMICS.....	176
7.2.1 <i>Trust and the ACU Academics</i> .....	178
7.2.2 <i>Reciprocity and the ACU Academics</i> .....	181
7.2.3 <i>Categorising the Social Capital of the ACU Academics</i> .....	183
7.2.3.1. Approach of social capital of the ACU TBB academics. ....	184
7.2.3.2. Type of social capital of the ACU TBB academics. ....	187
7.3 CASE 2.2 - THE ACU TBB ACADEMICS AS A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (CoP) .....	190
7.3.1 <i>A Shared Passion or Concern</i> .....	191
7.3.2 <i>Mutual Engagement</i> .....	191
7.3.3 <i>Shared Repertoire</i> .....	192
7.4 CASE 2.3 - BLENDED LEARNING AND THE ACU TBB ACADEMICS .....	192
7.5 ACU TBB ACADEMICS – SIGNIFICANCE OF PARTICIPATION IN THE ACU TBB PROGRAMS.....	197
7.5 CONCLUSION .....	199
<b>CHAPTER 8 – THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY THAI-BURMA BORDER REFUGEE STUDENTS.....</b>	<b>200</b>
8.1 INTRODUCTION .....	200
8.2 THE ACU TBB STUDY CENTRES .....	201
8.2.1 <i>The ACU Mae Sot Study Centre (Location 1)</i> .....	203
8.2.2 <i>The ACU TBB Study Centre</i> .....	204
8.3 CASE 3.1 - SOCIAL CAPITAL OF THE ACU TBB DIPLOMA IN LIBERAL STUDIES REFUGEE STUDENT COHORT .....	206
8.3.1 <i>Trust and the ACU Refugee Students</i> .....	206
8.3.2 <i>Categorising the Social Capital of the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies Refugee Student Cohort</i> .....	208
8.3.2.1. Approach of social capital of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort. ....	208
8.3.2.2. Type of social capital of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort. ....	214
8.4 CASE 3.2 - THE ACU TBB DIPLOMA IN LIBERAL STUDIES REFUGEE STUDENT COHORT AS A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (CoP) .....	216
8.5 CASE 3.3 - BLENDED LEARNING AND THE ACU TBB DIPLOMA IN LIBERAL STUDIES REFUGEE STUDENT COHORT .....	219
8.5.1 <i>Online Component of the Blend</i> .....	220
8.5.2 <i>Face-to-Face Component of the Blend</i> .....	222

8.5.3 <i>Improving the Blended Learning Experience</i> .....	224
8.6 DISCUSSION .....	228
8.7 TESTIMONY: A TALE OF TWO REFUGEE STUDENTS AND ‘THANK YOU’.....	231
8.8 CONCLUSION .....	238
<b>CHAPTER 9 - CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>240</b>
9.1 INTRODUCTION.....	240
9.2 FINDINGS.....	241
9.2.1 <i>Why is the Attainment of Higher Education by Refugees on the TBB and in Universal Locations of Protracted Forced Migration Crises so Scant?</i> .....	241
9.2.2 <i>How Have the ACU TBB Programs Been Achieved?</i> .....	244
9.2.2.1 The role and contribution of the praxis of social capital.....	246
9.2.2.2 The role and contribution of the praxis of communities of practice.....	247
9.2.2.3 The role and contribution of the praxis of blended learning.....	248
9.2.2.4 Other reasons why the ACU TBB programs have worked. ....	250
9.2.3 <i>Achieving the Objectives of the Study</i> .....	251
9.3 RECOMMENDATIONS .....	253
9.3.1 <i>Refugee Higher Education Policy</i> .....	253
9.3.2 <i>Political Dialogue</i> .....	253
9.3.3 <i>Collaboration</i> .....	254
9.3.4 <i>Up-To-Date Refugee Education Assessments</i> .....	254
9.3.5 <i>Diversity</i> .....	255
9.3.6 <i>Promotion of In Situ Refugee Higher Education Archetypes</i> .....	256
9.3.7 <i>Practicalities of In Situ Delivery</i> .....	257
9.4 FURTHER RESEARCH.....	258
9.4.1 <i>Pedagogy of Blended Learning in the ACU TBB Programs</i> .....	258
9.4.2 <i>Comparative Case Studies</i> .....	258
9.4.3 <i>Substantial Exploration of the ACU TBB Academics and Refugee Student Cohorts as Communities of Practice (CoP)</i> .....	259
9.5 CONCLUSION .....	259
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>262</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>295</b>
APPENDIX A: UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY & AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE DOCUMENTS .....	295
APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER TO INTERVIEW RTEC MEMBERS .....	308
APPENDIX C: REFUGEE STUDENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE.....	309
APPENDIX D: RTEC MEMBER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE .....	313
APPENDIX E: ACU ACADEMIC INTERVIEW SCHEDULE .....	317
APPENDIX F: POLICY-MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE SCHEDULE .....	321
APPENDIX G: 1951 UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES.....	324

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1 Embedded case design.....	83
Table 2: Interview participants.....	90
Table 3: Online Questionnaire Participants. ....	92
Table 4: Observation Participants.....	94
Table 5: Data Collection Summary.....	95
Table 6: Data locations.....	96
Table 7: Barriers and Constraints Matrix – Policy-makers and Practitioners. ....	110
Table 8: Embedded design of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC) case study.....	151
Table 9: Approach to Social Capital of the RTEC .....	166
Table 10: Embedded design of the ACU TBB Academics case study .....	175
Table 11: Approach to Social Capital of the ACU Academics.....	187
Table 12: Embedded design of the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort case study.....	201
Table 13: Approach to Social Capital of the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort.....	214

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Warehoused Refugee Populations.....	23
Figure 2: Refugee Camps on the Thai-Burma Border.....	24
Figure 3: Conceptual differences between the three perspectives of social capital.....	48
Figure 4: The Structure of Reciprocity.....	52
Figure 5: Universe of Norms Matrix.....	55
Figure 6: Communities of Inquiry.....	76
Figure 7: Components of Data Analysis - Interactive Model.....	99
Figure 8: Average level of significance.....	111
Figure 9: Location of Mae Sot, Thailand.....	202

## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

*We should not believe the many who say that only the free ought to be educated  
but rather we should believe the philosophers who say that only the educated are free.*

*The Discourses, Epictetus<sup>2</sup> (55AD-135AD)*

This study explored the practical application of social capital, communities of practice (CoP) and blended learning in overcoming complexities in attainment of higher education by refugees residing in refugee camps along the Thai-Burma<sup>3</sup> border (hereafter the ‘TBB’). The focus of the study was on three Australian Catholic University (ACU) programs (Diploma in Business, Certificate in Theology and Diploma in Liberal Studies) delivered to refugee students on the TBB between 2003 and 2010. The tenet of the study is that *social capital* amongst a series of actors, particularly the Melbourne-based Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC and ACU, supported by *communities of practice* within the RTEC, ACU TBB academics and the ACU TBB refugee student cohorts, and a *blended learning* model of education delivery by ACU have combined to overcome complexities in attainment of higher education in a location of protracted forced migration crisis<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> An ancient Greek Stoic Philosopher. This quote is taken from his work The Discourses, Book 2, Chapter 1. Retrieved March 26, 2010 from <http://classics.mit.edu/Epictetus/discourses.2.two.html>.

<sup>3</sup> There is contention in referring to the country name of Burma. Burma’s ruling military junta changed the country name from Burma to Myanmar in 1989. Despite this change not being approved by any sitting legislature in Burma, the name Myanmar was recognised by the United Nations and several western countries including France and Japan; however, along with the United States and the United Kingdom, Australia’s government did not (BBC News, 2007; CARE Australia, 2008; US Central Intelligence Agency, 2008). As this study is being conducted at an Australian university and following with Australian Government convention, the name ‘Burma’ will be used in preference to Myanmar in this thesis.

<sup>4</sup> The term forced migration crisis refers to movement from place or country of residence, otherwise than by voluntary decision of the individual or group. In practice, the term is used to signify the presence of elements of coercion, such as threats to life or livelihood, arising from natural or man-made causes (UNHCR & FMO, 2010). See Chapter 2, Section 2.1.2 for further information on protracted forced migration crises.

## 1.1 Context of the Study

On April 19, 2006 in the TBB town of Mae Sot, Thailand, seventeen Karen Burmese refugee students participated in an award granting ceremony of ACU. The awarding of a Diploma in Business to sixteen refugee students and a Certificate in Business to another was the culmination of ACU's *Karen Tertiary Education Pilot Project*. At the time, the project with its accredited *higher education* award was believed to be the first of its kind whereby refugee student selection, enrolment, *in situ*<sup>5</sup> course delivery and graduation all occurred in a location of protracted forced migration crisis.

The catalyst for the Karen Tertiary Education Pilot Project was a request to ACU by the Australian-based Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC) for ACU to consider delivering higher education courses to refugees residing in camps on the TBB. The RTEC, a grassroots refugee higher education advocacy<sup>6</sup> organisation based in Melbourne, Australia, began with the vision of one man, the Australian Jesuit, Revd. Dr. Michael Smith, SJ<sup>7</sup>.

Fr. Smith first encountered refugees in 1983/84 while working with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) teaching English to Vietnamese boatpeople in refugee camps in the Philippine Islands (MacLaren, 2008b). Fr. Smith recalls, “I remember thinking to myself one day, wouldn’t it be great to be able to offer higher education courses to young people in the camp?” (M. Smith, 2007, p. 1). What was an impossible dream at the time for Fr. Smith is now, with the advent of the Internet, World Wide Web (WWW) and development of online learning, possible.

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<sup>5</sup> Adv. “In its (original) place” (Turner, 1984, p. 359).

<sup>6</sup> According to Yanacopulous (2008), advocacy means “to promote the causes of others, and involves an inherently political set of actions” (p. 310).

<sup>7</sup> Rev. Dr Michael Smith is referred to as Fr. Michael Smith or Fr. Smith hereafter.

The Karen Tertiary Education Pilot Project has been followed by three other higher education programs delivered to refugees on the TBB between 2006 and 2010:

- A Certificate in Theology by ACU to a single cohort of refugee students;
- A ‘Scholarships for Burma’ project by Open Universities Australia (OUA) which provides access to online university undergraduate and postgraduate courses for Burmese refugees working on the TBB for local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community-based Organisations (CBOs); and
- A Diploma in Liberal Studies by ACU (as a collaborative partner with 4 American Jesuit universities: Fairfield University, Gonzaga University, Regis University and St. Louis University) to a single cohort of refugee students.

## ***1.2 Problem Statement***

Refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises such as the TBB who possess appropriate qualifications, recognition of prior learning and/ or skills for matriculation into accredited university programs within their host countries have scant opportunities to participate in such programs. Restrictions placed upon travel movements of refugees by host countries and a distinct lack of funded, accredited in situ higher education refugee programs offered by universities in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and local and international NGOs are denying refugees access to merit-based higher education.

Despite declarations, covenants and the notion that education is increasingly viewed as a fourth or central pillar of humanitarian response, alongside nourishment, shelter and health services (Sinclair, 2002a, 2002b), higher education options presently available to refugees are a limited number of Deutsche Akademische Flüchtlings Initiative Albert Einstein (DAFI) scholarships<sup>8</sup> to study in a refugee's host country (Morlang & Watson, 2007) and the aforementioned ACU and OUA TBB programs<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, as the main objective of the DAFI scholarship scheme is a contribution by the refugee scholarship recipient to reconstruction in their country of origin, it has proved difficult to maintain DAFI programs in locations of protracted forced migration crises and DAFI programs in Thailand began winding back in 2003 (Morlang & Watson, 2007). Therefore, although the Royal Thai Government (RTG) accommodate the existence of refugee camps on the TBB, the refugees residing in camps along the TBB remain solely under the auspice of the UNHCR and the local and international NGO community and in relation to access to higher education courses remain unable to apply to the DAFI program, let alone meet the main criteria for the awarding of scholarships through the DAFI program.

On a visit to the TBB in May 2008, Mr. Duncan MacLaren, ACU's Coordinator of Refugee Program on the TBB reported that there were 62 primary and secondary schools among the 10 TBB camps<sup>10</sup>. However, post-secondary education (not including the ACU, OUA or the joint ACU and 4 Jesuit Universities consortium

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<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3 Refugee Education.

<sup>9</sup> In May 2010, Dundalk Institute of Technology initiated a pilot project for the delivery of distance higher education to refugees in Nu Po refugee camp. This program falls outside the scope of this study. Other programs offer very limited scholarships to refugees to travel to a third country to attend university. An overview of one such program, The Thailand Project, is described online as follows: "Through extraordinary international cooperation, the Kingdom of Thailand made a landmark decision to allow two stateless individuals to study abroad in the United States; Thai Citizenship was granted to one and a Travel Document was granted to the other. On August 25, 2008, the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point welcomed the first two Thailand Project scholarship recipients". For further information see <http://www.TheThailandProject.org>.

<sup>10</sup> See Figure 2, p. 24 for listing and location of these camps.

program) is limited to one initiative: a Leadership and Management Training College (LMTC) based in Mae La camp. The LMTC was founded in 2006 by the Karen Education Department (KED) and is financially supported by a Swiss NGO, Child's Dream Foundation. The College has approximately 60 students but courses delivered lack international recognition and accreditation. MacLaren (2008) indicates...

...the KED are obviously very concerned at the brain drain from the camps (of the 120 students who had completed a higher studies programme last year, 59 had left) and see this programme as one way of stemming the flow and providing refugees who are not being resettled with higher education (MacLaren, 2008c, p. 4).

Meanwhile, any degree awarded to refugee students undertaking subjects from the LMTC curriculum would not be internationally recognised unless linkage with a Thai or international university could be arranged (MacLaren, 2008a, 2008c).

Each Karen Tertiary Education Pilot Project student was seeking refugee status and based in a TBB refugee camp at the time of their graduation. The location of delivery on the TBB of the Karen Tertiary Education Pilot Project was a house in a small village near the Mae La refugee camp; *not inside Mae La camp itself*. The ACU delivery model is a step *towards* directly delivering accredited higher education into refugee camps for refugees on the TBB. As yet however, there is no resolution to the refugee camp as campus paradox on the TBB by providing accredited university courses to refugees *inside* refugee camps as Internet access, the medium for online delivery, is not permitted inside the TBB camps by the RTG<sup>11</sup> (McKinsey, 2007b; Veling, 2007; Voice of America, 2005; Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2008).

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<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3.1. Education in the Thai-Burma Border Camps for further discussion on reasons for this decision by the RTG and implications for online education delivery by international education providers inside the TBB camps.

By the end of 2007 the world refugee population was 16 million of which 11.4 million were under the direct responsibility of the UNHCR and 4.6 million Palestinian refugees under the responsibility of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) (UNHCR, 2008a). Half of the world's refugee population is aged between 18 and 59 years (UNHCR, 2008a). At present, Thailand hosts some 112,000 refugees on the TBB who have been registered, and an estimated 50,000 who have not (UNHCR, 2010a). The Thai Burma Border Consortium (TBBC<sup>12</sup>) estimates the actual refugee camp population as being closer to 145,000 as those refugees that fled Burma after 2005 have been ineligible to register at camps due to a moratorium on refugee registration implemented by the RTG (Brees, 2008a). Therefore, on the TBB there exists an under-served refugee learner population far greater than any current capacity of higher education being offered by organisations such as ACU, OUA, and American-based Jesuit Universities or through DAFI scholarships for refugees.

### ***1.3 Aims, Objectives and Research Questions***

The process of exploring complexities in attainment of higher education by refugees residing on the TBB was achieved in this study through a series of aims, objectives and research questions.

#### ***1.3.1 Aims***

There were three aims of this study. Firstly, this study aimed to understand how a vision of higher education for refugees in a location of protracted forced migration crisis transitioned to a reality. For example, how did the RTEC as a

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<sup>12</sup> TBBC is a consortium of 12 international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from ten countries providing food, shelter and non-food items to refugees and displaced people from Burma (TBBC, 2010a).

grassroots refugee education advocacy organisation and ACU as the operational actor manage to deliver accredited higher education to refugees in a location of protracted forced migration crisis? Secondly, this study aimed to explore the role and contribution of the praxis of social capital, communities of practice and blended learning towards the development and deployment of the ACU TBB Diploma in Business, Certificate in Theology and Diploma in Liberal Studies programs. This occurred by exploring the experiences of the members of the RTEC, the ACU TBB refugee students and ACU academics who delivered the ACU TBB programs. For example, the practical application of social capital and communities of practice within the RTEC was explored while the practical application of social capital, communities of practice *and* blended learning were explored within the ACU TBB refugee student cohorts and the ACU TBB program academics. Thirdly, this study aimed to identify implications and/or strategies for the design of future higher education programs for refugees delivered into universal locations of protracted forced migration crises by universities either individually or in partnership with other higher education institutions and/ or members of the international NGO education community.

### *1.3.2 Objectives*

There were four research objectives which assisted in achieving the aims of this study. Firstly, this study formally documents the ACU TBB programs as archetypes of higher education delivered to refugees in a location of protracted forced migration crisis. Secondly, this study examined the role of the RTEC as a catalyst for accredited refugee university education delivery on the TBB. Thirdly, this study used theories of social capital and communities of practice as theoretical lenses to examine relations between members of the RTEC, between the RTEC and ACU and also between refugee students and academics involved in the ACU TBB programs. Finally,

this study described how the praxis of blended learning has contributed towards the attainment of higher education for refugees on the TBB.

### *1.3.3 Research Questions*

There were two broad research questions posed in this study. They were:

1. Why is the attainment of higher education by refugees on the Thai-Burma Border and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises so scant?

For example, this research question identified the barriers and constraints to delivering accredited higher education to refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises.

2. How have the Australian Catholic University (ACU) Thai-Burma Border programs been achieved?

For example, this research question explored possible reasons that made the ACU TBB programs successful?

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the little understood phenomenon of attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB; particularly how complexities involved in attaining higher education by refugees in a location of forced migration can be overcome. As this was achieved through adopting a qualitative research strategy utilising an exploratory case study paradigm, the research questions were designed with the purpose and overall research methodology in mind (See Chapter 4 – Research Methodology). Furthermore, Yin (2003) indicates case studies are the preferred research strategy when ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are being posed and Neuman (2006) describes how each research question can be refined by “focusing on the ‘What’ question” (p. 33).

By achieving the aims and objectives and answering the research questions, this study contributes to the field of in situ refugee higher education not only on the TBB but also in other locations of protracted forced migration crises and is one step towards resolving the universal refugee camp as campus paradox.

#### **1.4 Research Strategy, Methods and Data Analysis**

The research strategy employed for this study was an embedded case study design with survey (interview and online questionnaire) and observation data collection methods. The embedded, multiple case design enabled individual cases on the RTEC, the ACU TBB students and the ACU TBB Academics to be explored through the praxis of social capital, communities of practice and blended learning.

Case Study 1 focused on the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC) and was explored using social capital and communities of practice theories. Case Study 2 focused on the refugee students who participated in the ACU TBB programs and Case Study 3 focused on a small sample of academics who participated in the ACU TBB programs. Case studies 2 and 3 were explored using social capital, communities of practice and blended learning theories. Interviews were conducted with the convenor of the RTEC, with the on-ground tutor for the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program and refugee students from the ACU TBB Certificate in Theology and Diploma in Liberal Studies programs. Separate online questionnaires were completed by members of the RTEC and by refugee students and ACU academics involved across all three ACU TBB programs. The refugee student online questionnaire was created for refugee students participating in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program who were unavailable for face-to-face interviewing during the researcher's fieldwork phase of the study and also with refugee students who had previously

completed the ACU TBB Diploma in Business and/ or Certificate in Theology programs and had since returned to refugee camps along the TBB or resettled to a third country. The RTEC member online questionnaire and the ACU Academic online questionnaire were created for RTEC members and ACU Academics who were not interviewed face-to-face or via Skype. An online questionnaire was also used to survey refugee education policy-makers and practitioners from local TBB NGOs, iNGOs and United Nations (UN) bodies such as UNESCO with expertise in refugee education on the TBB or other locations of protracted forced migration crises.

Observations were conducted for Case Study 2 on a small sample of refugee students participating in the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies program during the researcher's fieldwork phase of the study on the TBB in April 2010.

Data was analysed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) high-level three-step iterative process of data reduction, data display and conclusion/ drawing verification (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.1-4.4.3). For Case Studies 1,2 and 3, data was analysed by exploring the core social capital dimension of trust, and by determining the approach and type of social capital based on Brunie's (2009) 'Approaches to Social Capital' comparative analysis framework (See Figure 3 in Chapter 3, Section 3.1.1) and Woolcock's (2001) categorizations of *bonding*, *bridging* and *linking* social capital (See Chapter 3, Section 3.1.1). Data for each case study was also analysed by conducting descriptive analyses. Further details of the methods used in this study are provided in Chapter 4 - Methodology.

## ***1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study***

### ***1.5.1 Scope***

The scope of this study was limited to exploring the RTEC and the three ACU TBB programs delivered between 2003 and 2010. The OUA ‘Scholarships for Burma’ Project and any programs delivered by Fairfield University, Gonzaga University, Regis University and St. Louis University, despite associations with ACU and/ or the RTEC, were not covered in depth in this thesis. Surveying OUA refugee students and Academics/ Coordinators would have added complexity to the data gathering process, involving multiple ethics applications to multiple universities within the OUA consortium. In regards to the 4 Jesuit universities, the Diploma in Liberal Studies was the first program where these universities were involved and during the data collection phase of this study some of the Jesuit universities had only delivered a single subject and some had yet to deliver any subjects at all.

The scope of this thesis was also limited to the use of three theories - social capital, communities of practice and blended learning - to explore the phenomena of attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB. This study does not suggest that these three theories are the *only* theories applicable for such a study. Rather, these particular theories were selected as the researcher believed through his pre-study association with the RTEC that each theory makes a contribution to the overall understanding of how the RTEC as a grassroots organisation with a vision of higher education for refugees and ACU as the operational actor of this vision have managed to enable the provision of higher education to refugees on the TBB.

### ***1.5.2 Limitations***

Limitations to this study included:

- *Explorative characteristic of the study* - This study was exploratory in nature rather than explanatory (See Chapter 4, Section 4.2). No hypothesis testing for causal relationships between social capital, communities of practice and blended learning to the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB was conducted.
- *ACU TBB Program Evaluations* - This study was not intended as an evaluation of the ACU TBB programs. ACU has already engaged experienced members of the international refugee NGO and higher education community to conduct an internal (and confidential) evaluation of the ACU TBB programs. The release of any key findings from those evaluation or subsequent evaluations is entirely at the discretion of ACU.
- *Recruitment of participants* - Not all refugee students who participated in the three ACU TBB programs were able to be contacted to participate in interviews and/ or complete an online questionnaire as part of this study. Attempts by a former refugee student (now repatriated to Australia) from the Karen Tertiary Education Pilot Project to contact fellow program graduates were also unsuccessful. This was primarily due to refugees having resettled in a third country since graduating from the ACU Diploma in Business and/ or Certificate in Theology programs and having lost contact with ACU and their fellow students. Out of the three ACU TBB programs that had been conducted or were being conducted at the time of the researcher's data collection phase of the study, only the Diploma in Liberal Studies program cohort were included in descriptive analysis of trust and categorisation of the approach and

type of social capital. The number of respondents from the ACU Diploma in Business and Certificate in Theology programs were too few and therefore the analysis on these cohorts was insignificant to present as part of this study's findings in their own right.

- *Disruption to students* - Field work by the researcher was only permissible during designated study sessions in the Diploma in Liberal Studies program on the TBB. The ACU refugee students on the TBB did not follow standard semester start and end dates comparable to the majority of conventional Australian-based or online ACU students. Rather, the refugee students participated in intensive 6 days per week sessions to complete each module in their Diploma.
- *Refugee relief experience of researcher* - The researcher has no direct field experience of refugee relief activities. This limitation means being reliant on staff members from international refugee relief agencies and NGOs with first-hand knowledge and experience of refugee relief activities (particularly refugee education). In dealing with large international agencies such as the UN, UNHCR and UNESCO, the size, globally distributed and bureaucratic nature of these organisations may pose difficulties in accessing staff with the appropriate knowledge sought by the researcher in a timely manner. This was the case with this research project.

## ***1.6 Significance of Research***

The significant contribution to be made from this study was an understanding of how social capital, supported by communities of practice and blended learning, has

contributed towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB. The achievement of the RTEC-ACU collaboration in enabling accredited higher education for refugees delivered in a location of protracted forced migration crisis provides a unique study opportunity. Currently refugee education program delivery is highly geared to primary and secondary students with less than 1% of the 1 million beneficiaries of UNHCR-administered refugee student places being at the higher education (university) level (UNHCR, 2008f). Therefore, as examples of in situ higher education for refugees are scant, studies which explore tangible examples of such education programs delivered to this under-served learner population offer value to academicians and practitioners, not to mention hope and optimism to adult refugees educated to secondary-level languishing in protracted forced migration crises.

If, as Amartya Sen (1999) argues, the expansion of basic education improves the quality of public debates (See Chapter 3, Section 3.1), then any contribution to overcoming the unfreedom of access to *higher* education manifested in refugee communities along the TBB must surely be a mighty one as a result of the way in which the ACU and partners have managed to deliver accredited higher education to refugees on the TBB.

Finally, the ACU education delivery model follows the English idiom, '*if Mohammed will not go the mountain, the mountain must come to Mohammed*'<sup>13</sup> where ACU has taken accredited higher education as close to an in situ model as possible for refugees on the TBB who are not permitted freedom to travel to the *mountain* (Thai

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<sup>13</sup> The Cambridge Idioms Dictionary (2006) describes this as “something that you say which means that if someone will not come to you, you have to go to them. Usage notes: This phrase comes from a story about Mohammed who was asked to show how powerful he was by making a mountain come to him”. Retrieved April 12, 2010 from [http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/If+Mohammed+will+not+go+to+the+mountain,+the+mountain+mu st+come+to+...](http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/If+Mohammed+will+not+go+to+the+mountain,+the+mountain+must+come+to+...)

universities or universities in other countries). This incremental step towards resolving the refugee camp as campus paradox is worthy of documentation. By doing so, this study has expounded the current TBB refugee higher education model for potential future deployment in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises. It is envisaged analysis from this study would be welcomed by members of the iNGO education community and by organisations such as the UNHCR and UNESCO.

### **1.7 Outline of Thesis**

This thesis is composed of a further eight chapters. *Chapter 2* provides a précis on the topic of refugees. The chapter defines refugees, provides information on international conventions and covenants protecting the rights of refugees and discusses refugee education. The chapter progressively moves from an international focus on refugees to a narrower focus on the refugee situation on the TBB. *Chapter 3* presents a review of literature on social capital, communities of practice and blended learning. The methodology applied to this study is described in *Chapter 4*. *Chapter 5* explores in situ higher education for refugees on the TBB. The chapter identifies barriers and constraints to delivering higher education to refugees on the TBB and offers potential recommendations to overcoming these obstacles. *Chapter's 6, 7 and 8* present separate case studies exploring the RTEC (*Chapter 6*), the ACU TBB academics (*Chapter 7*) and the ACU TBB refugee students (*Chapter 8*) and the role of the praxis of social capital, communities of practice and blended learning in the attainment of higher education for refugees on the TBB. These three chapters explore the major discussion points and develop the findings for this study. Key findings, implications and recommendations and suggestions for further streams of research emanating from this study are made in *Chapter 9*. This concluding chapter also presents powerful testimony from members of the RTEC, ACU refugee student cohorts and ACU

Academic participant groups on the significance of being involved in the TBB programs before final remarks on this study are made. By presenting the testimony, the participants in this study are able to give a far more powerful voice than the researcher could ever possibly provide as a rallying call for the provision of refugee higher education in locations of protracted forced migration crises.

## CHAPTER 2 - REFUGEES

*We are all refugees of a future that never happened.*

Lee Weiner<sup>14</sup>

This chapter presents a précis on the topic of refugees. As this study focuses on the attainment of higher education by refugees it is therefore prudent to set the scene for this study, define a refugee, identify legal frameworks which support universal refugee rights and discuss refugee education and the specific issues surrounding a distinct lack of higher education opportunities for refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises. The intention of the chapter is to touch upon these issues in such a way as to engage all readers; both refugee relief practitioners and non-practitioners alike.

A feature of this chapter is its combined narrative and review of literature presentation style of discussion on the theme of refugees in general and the refugee situation on the TBB in particular. The function of the chapter is to act as a hybrid background-review of literature on refugees, a bridge which leads the reader along the path of the study from background context into the study's review of social capital, communities of practice and blended learning literature in Chapter 3.

### **2.1 Refugees**

The basic rights and fundamental freedoms owed to all human beings are proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and although not a binding force, the declaration is “internationally recognised as a cornerstone of human rights

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<sup>14</sup> See <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/chicago10/chicago10.html> for brief a description of Lee Weiner and the ‘Chicago 10’.

protection” (United Nations, 1948, p. 2). Article 14.1 of the declaration states “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution” (United Nations, 1948, p. 2). It is this article which forms the basis of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees<sup>15</sup> (UNHCR, 2008b). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR<sup>16</sup>) defines a refugee as a person who...

...owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (UNHCR, 2008g, p. 2).

The 1951 Refugee Convention obliges state parties to issue refugees with identity papers and documentation required for international travel - the Convention Travel Document (CTD) (Verdirame & Harrell-Bond, 2005) - and protects refugees from being forcibly returned to their place of origin by the principle of non-refoulement. The process of registration by refugees with the UNHCR is a key protection tool for a refugee. Registration can “ensure access to basic rights and family reunification, help to identify persons in need of special assistance, and provide information critical to finding appropriate durable solutions” (UNHCR, 2003, p. 5). In a pragmatic sense registration allows the UNHCR to “ascertain the number of refugees and to properly identify them...profiling refugee families to determine their specific needs and cater assistance programmes accordingly” (UNHCR, 2010d, p. 1).

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix G

<sup>16</sup> The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is also commonly referred to as the UN Refugee Agency. Both names are used interchangeably in this thesis.

The UNHCR describe the granting of asylum to individuals fleeing persecution as “one of the earliest hallmarks of civilization” (UNHCR, 2008c, p. 5) with antecedents dating back 3,500 years to Middle Eastern empires such as the Hittites, Babylonians, Assyrians and Egyptians (UNHCR, 2008c). Rogers (1992) notes although the United Nations (UN) developed “the set of norms, laws and institutions” (p. 1114) to assist forced migrants in the early post World War II years, the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees has its roots two decades prior to World War II. In the 1920’s the League of Nations, the precursor of the UN, recognised the need to provide contemporary refugee protection status to increasing numbers of individuals moving from their home in search of asylum as a result of World War 1 (UNHCR, 2008c).

By 1947, three years after cessation of World War II in Europe there remained more than 1 million refugees across Europe seeking a solution to their plight. The International Refugee Organisation (IRO) was mandated to resettle rather than rehabilitate and repatriate these European refugees. Between 1947 and 1951, 329,000 refugees resettled in the United States, 182,000 in Australia, 132,000 in Israel and 117,000 in various European states (Gallagher, 1989; Marrus, 1985). Having completed its mandate by 1951, the IRO was replaced by the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees working within the newly adopted framework of the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

As the problem of displacement spread, a 1967 Protocol expanded the scope of the UN Refugee Convention and “eliminated the temporal restrictions on eligibility for refugee status that had been limited to people fleeing events occurring before 1951” (Verdirame & Harrell-Bond, 2005, p. xiv). The original document also inspired regional instruments such as the 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of

Refugee Problems in Africa (Organization of African Unity - OAU) Convention (Jackson, 1999; OAU, 1969) and the 1984 Latin American Cartagena Declaration (UNHCR, 1984).

### *2.1.1 Differentiating Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Migrants*

Refugees are one of three categories of individuals who feel *forced* to move from their home locations; the others being internally displaced persons (IDPs) and migrants (UNHCR, 2008c). There is often misunderstanding and resentment surrounding the application of the term '*refugee*' in relation to internally displaced persons and who exactly *should* and *should not* be labeled a refugee (McAdam & Loughry, 2009; Weiss, 1999). Weiss (2003) notes that there is "little recognition, outside specialist circles, that a person merits the label (of refugee) only if he or she has crossed internationally recognised borders to escape a well-founded fear of persecution" (p. 434). In the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) '*1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*' distinction between refugees and IDPs is provided with IDPs defined as...

...persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human made disasters and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border (OCHA, 2010, pp. 2-3).

McAdam & Loughry (2009) note "it's important to remember that people at risk of environmental or climate displacement are not 'refugees' as a matter of law" and that "even as a merely descriptive term, the refugee label is at best pre-emptive, and at worst offensive, for those to whom it is applied" (pp. 1-2). This situation was

evident in inappropriate labeling in media reports of Hurricane Katrina<sup>17</sup> evacuees as refugees rather than IDPs (Kirgis, 2005) (Masquelier, 2006; Pesca, 2005).

Migrants are the third category of individuals who feel *forced* to move from their home location. Migrants, especially economic migrants, choose to move to improve their lives whereas refugees move to *save* their lives or preserve their freedom (OCHA, 2010). Furthermore, Moore & Shellman's (2004) definition of a forced migrant as “a person, who owing to a fear of persecution, has abandoned her or his dwelling in favour of relocating elsewhere, either within or beyond the borders of her or his country of residence” (p. 724) illustrates how a forced migrant may transition through circumstance into becoming a refugee or IDP dependent on their action of *crossing the border*. In the case of Burmese refugees and migrants on the TBB Brees (2008b) notes that ...

...Push factors almost always stem from interlinked political and economic root causes in Burma, which makes it impossible to distinguish economic migrants from asylum seekers and refugees (p. 383).

Moore & Shellman (2004) suggest the total number of forced migrants of country X is equal to the sum of refugees and IDPs from country X. According to Brun (2001) there is “an increased realization that refugees and other migrants in refugee-like situations are part of a complex network of migrants who have migrated with different degrees of force and intention” (p. 16).

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<sup>17</sup> Hurricane Katrina, an Atlantic hurricane caused devastation along the United States' Gulf Coast, particularly to the city of New Orleans, during late August 2005. See Knabb, R.D.; Rhome, J.R.; Brown, Daniel P (December 20, 2005; updated August 10, 2006). "Tropical Cyclone Report: Hurricane Katrina: 23–30 August 2005" (PDF). National Hurricane Center. [http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pdf/TCR-AL122005\\_Katrina.pdf](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/pdf/TCR-AL122005_Katrina.pdf).

### 2.1.2 *Warehoused Refugees on Thai-Burma Border*

Warehousing is described as “the practice of keeping refugees in protracted situations of restricted mobility, enforced idleness, and dependency—their lives on indefinite hold” (Smith, 2004, p. 38). Loescher (2009) describes how the UNHCR identifies a major protracted refugee situation as one where...

...more than 25,000 refugees have been in exile for more than five years.

Using this criteria, nearly two-thirds of refugees in the world today – over six million people – are in protracted refugee situations. According to UNHCR, in 2009 there are some 30 major protracted refugee situations around the world. The average length of stay in these states of virtual limbo is now approaching 20 years, up from an average of nine years in the early 1990s. Thus not only is a greater percentage of the world’s refugees in protracted exile than before but these situations are lasting longer (p. 9).

Hakovirta (1993) describes as “a calamity that the great majority of the world’s refugees are living more or less permanently in camps intended for temporary refuge only” (p. 38). As of December 2008, in the most extreme cases warehousing exceeds 60 years (Gaza, West Bank and Lebanon) and the Burmese refugee crisis on the TBB ranks 14<sup>th</sup> in the list of longest continuing warehoused refugee crises as shown in Figure 1.

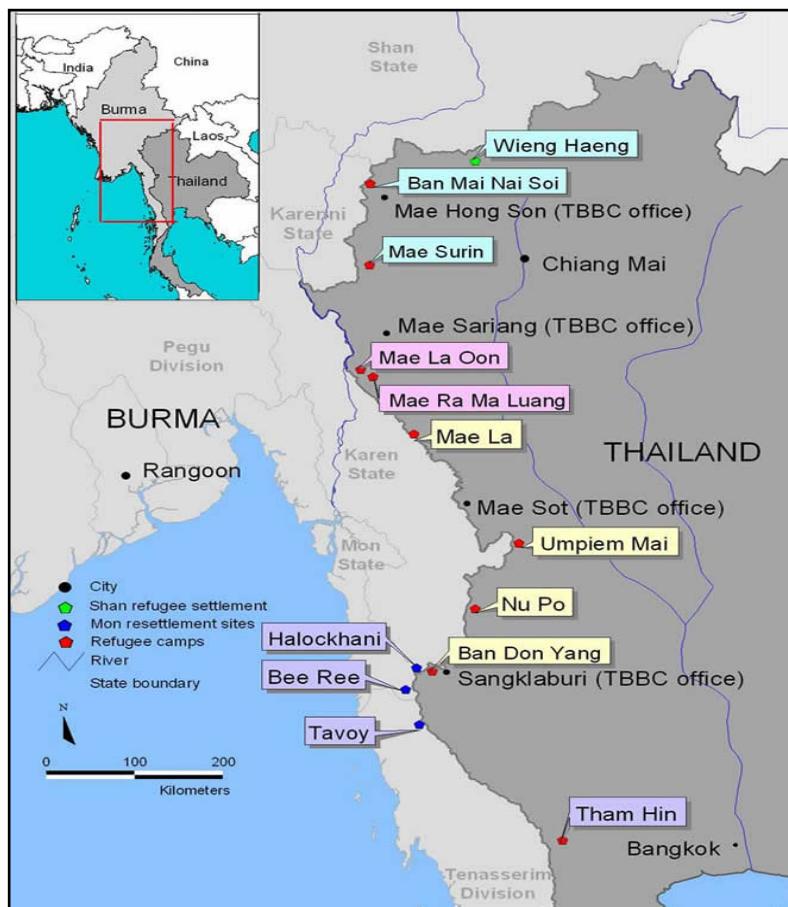


**Figure 1: Warehoused Refugee Populations.**

(Source: (USCRI, 2009))

Karen, Karenni, Shan and Mon ethnic Burmese minorities began fleeing Burma into Thailand at the end of World War II (Hynd, 2002). However, in 1984 significant numbers began arriving as a result of forced displacement, forced labour (Hynd, 2002) and counterinsurgency activities by the Burmese army against armed

ethnic minority groups fighting for independence or greater autonomy from the Burmese government (Amnesty International, 1997; Brees, 2008a). 2010 TBBC data for refugee sites on the TBB with population figures available indicated a refugee population of 146,500 refugees recorded by TBBC compared with 101,300 UNHCR)<sup>18</sup> in camps along the TBB. These camps are shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Refugee Camps on the Thai-Burma Border.**

(Source: Thailand Burma Border Consortium <http://www.tbbc.org/index.htm>)

Although Thailand has sheltered approximately 1.3 million refugees over the last four decades (UNHCR, 2010a), it is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. Brees (2008a) indicates the reason Thailand is not yet a signatory to the

<sup>18</sup> The TBBC figures include all persons verified as living in the TBB camps and eligible for rations, registered or not. The UNHCR figures include registered refugees, pending registrations and some students. Source: (TBBC, 2010b).

convention as being “Thailand has had to carry the burden of refugee inflows from neighbouring countries for decades and prefers to keep tight control on its ability to respond according to its own interests” (p. 5). The RTG allows the UNHCR to monitor the refugee camps but not to establish a presence inside the camps. The care of the refugees is assumed by some 20 international and local NGOs who operate under the guidance of the Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT<sup>19</sup>) (UNHCR, 2008h).

### *2.1.3 Refugee Education: Overcoming an Unfreedom*

Sen (1999) argues that focusing on human freedoms provides a broader view of development rather than using conventional measures such as Gross National Product (GNP), income levels or other measures such as technological advancement and social modernization. He adds that freedom requires “the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactivity of repressive states” (p. 3) and that “freedoms depend also on other determinants, such as social and economic arrangements (for example, facilities for education...” (p. 3). One the one hand, in attempting to overcome an unfreedom by providing in situ higher education to refugees, a higher education provider (such as is the context for this study) must avoid what Freire (1996) describes as the concept of ‘banking education’ whereby knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. On the other hand it could be argued that what is really being offered by the education provider is what Bauer (1957) regards as...

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<sup>19</sup> The Committee for the Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT) was set up in 1975 in response to the influx of refugees from Indochina following the Vietnam War.

...the extension of the range of choice, that is, an increase in the range of effective alternatives open to the people, as the principle objective and criterion of economic development; and I judge a measure principally by its probable effect on the range of alternatives open to individuals (pp. 113-114).

Freire (1996) asserts that “men and women rarely admit their fear of freedom openly, however, tending rather to camouflage it—sometimes unconsciously—by presenting themselves as defenders of freedom” (p. 18). Freire (1996) states that ...

...sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who made them so. In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain the humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn the oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both (p. 26).

Furthermore, this lesson, Freire (1996) believes must come from not only the oppressed themselves but from those who are truly in solidarity with them.

Sachs (2005) believes societies around the world generally want to ensure that everybody has adequate levels of access to key goods and services such as health care, drinking water and education as a matter of rights and justice. He labels such goods that should be available to everyone as ‘merit goods’ and suggests that the rights to these merit goods should be “an informal commitment of the world’s governments as they are enshrined in international law, mostly in the UN declaration of Human Rights” (p. 253). He also raises the point that follow-through by UN member States on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) would be a practical and pragmatic application of Article 28 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights which states “Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and

freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized” (p. (United Nations, 1948, p. 7).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (UNHCR, 1976) proclaim the right of an individual to the access of merit-based higher education. Article 26 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims “Everyone has the right to education...and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit” (United Nations, 1948). Article 13 (2c) of the ICESCR states, “Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education” (ICESCR, 1976, p. 1). These rights are also afforded to refugees through the 1951 UN Refugee Convention where Article 22 (2) establishes...

...contracting states shall accord to refugees treatment as favourable as possible, and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, with respect to education other than elementary education and, in particular, as regards access to studies, the recognition of foreign school Certificates, Diplomas and degrees, the remission of fees and charges and the award of scholarships (UNHCR, 1951, p. 5).

The terms ‘higher’, ‘post-secondary’, ‘university-level’ and ‘tertiary’ education are analogous. ‘Higher’ is the term expressed in Article 26 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This term has evolved over time. For example, up until 1993 the accepted definition of higher education was the one devised and accepted in 1962 by 44 nations participating in a UNESCO conference on higher education in Africa.

...all types of education (academic, professional, technological, or teacher education) provided in institutions such as universities, liberal arts colleges, technological institutes and teachers' colleges for which: (a) the basic entrance requirement is completion of secondary education ... (b) the usual entrance age is about 18 years; and (c) in which the courses lead to the giving of a named award (Degree, Diploma, or Certificate of higher studies) (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1985).

This definition<sup>20</sup> was amended during UNESCO's General Conference at its 27th session (November 1993) in the Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education to...

...all types of studies, training or training for research at the post-secondary level, provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent State authorities (UNESCO, 2008).

For this study, where higher education programs were delivered to refugees on the TBB by an Australian University, higher education awards recognised by the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF<sup>21</sup>) include degrees at Bachelor, Master or Doctorate levels, and “also include Graduate Diploma or Graduate Certificate, or any other award (such as Diploma or Advanced Diploma) specified as a higher education award under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF, 2011a, p. 2).

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<sup>20</sup> Adopted as Definition 1(a) on 13 November, 1993 during the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), meeting in Paris from 25 October to 16 November 1993, at its twenty-seventh session.

<sup>21</sup> The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is “a quality assured national framework of qualifications in the school, vocational education and training (VET), and higher education sectors in Australia. The AQF is a structure of recognised and endorsed qualifications that promotes lifelong learning and provides pathways through Australia’s education and training system. The AQF is a key national policy instrument to protect the quality of Australian education and training wherever it is delivered. The Framework was developed and is endorsed by all Australian governments through the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and therefore an AQF qualification is recognised around Australia and by other countries” (AQF, 2011b, p. 1).

The UNHCR indicate “the right of access to education is both a vital component of and necessary to durable solutions for refugee situations worldwide” (Morlang & Watson, 2007, p. 7). The importance of education in refugee contexts is noted by the UNHCR which describes the need for refugee education as “the most critical element in bridging the gap between relief assistance and durable solutions” (UNHCR, 1997, p. 1). Education is widely perceived as contributing to the physical, psychosocial, and cognitive protection of children, adolescents and adult learners (Ahearn, 2000; L. Davies & Talbot, 2008). Preston (1991) indicates that in virtually every refugee situation, education is an issue raised by refugees, host countries, NGOs and donors. Indeed, refugees often begin setting up their own ad hoc schools with very limited physical resources, even before relief assistance is available from NGOs, governments, or international organisations (Preston, 1991; Verdirame & Harrell-Bond, 2005).

The provision of education to refugees does have implications. For example, in regards to the efforts of the UNHCR to promote the education of refugees in Southern Sudan, Verdirame and Harrell-Bond (2005) suggest the overriding concern of the UN refugee agency on the “possible ‘pull factors’ undermined these efforts” (p. 258). Brown (1999, cited in Verdirame & Harrell-Bond, 2005) follows on this point by noting that...

...Education is an important ingredient for a refugee child’s development and survival but it could also be a pull factor attracting an excessively large number of refugees into a country...How do we distinguish between refugees who are really genuine from migrations who are just drifting between countries looking for possibilities of free (higher) education? (p. 258).

In 2003, programs of refugee education delivered at basic, primary and secondary levels covered almost 600,000 children located at 66 refugee camp locations in 22 asylum countries (UNHCR, 2008e). Brown (2005) found Community-based schools provide refugee empowerment but they also require outside support and accreditation. Funding for education programs in protracted forced migration crises is limited though as donors typically do not place high priority on education for conflict affected populations (GTZ, 2005; UNHCR, 2001) and as a result, “tragically the international community has tended to place less value on education than refugees themselves” (UNHCR, 2001, p. iii). Recognising that education is pushed to the margin, especially during emergencies, UNHCR was involved in the creation of INEE (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies)<sup>22</sup> and remains actively involved (UNHCR, 2010c). INEE’s Minimum Standards for Educations in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction (INEE, 2004) is predominantly concerned with basic, primary and secondary education. Despite having the words ‘chronic crises’ in the title, little discussion is applied to this category. Brown (2005) notes that “Post-Primary Education (PPE) - whether in the form of tertiary education, formal secondary school or vocational training - is expensive” (p. 31) and that donors seem unsure whether PPE for refugees falls under short-term relief or long-term development.

In the late 1980’s the German Government initiated a scholarship program to support refugee students with access to higher education within a refugee’s host country (Morlang & Watson, 2007). 134 students throughout Africa and Pakistan were able to pursue university education under the scheme until the program ceased in 1990

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<sup>22</sup> The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is an open global network of representatives from NGOs, UN agencies, donor agencies, governments, academic institutions, schools and affected populations working together to ensure all persons the right to quality and safe education in emergencies and post-crisis recovery (INEE, 2010)

as a result of the departure of a key project partner. The German government sought a replacement partner for the project and in 1991, negotiations between the UNHCR and the German government led to the establishment of the Deutsche Akademische Flüchtlings Initiative Albert Einstein (DAFI) programme. Since 1992 DAFI has provided 5,000 scholarships for refugees to enable them to study at universities and colleges in their host country (Morlang & Watson, 2007).

Ahlen (2006) indicates that in response to a range of education challenges for the UNHCR, the UN refugee agency is only able to “continue support for tertiary education through the DAFI initiative” (p. 11). In an evaluation report on the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the DAFI programme, Morlang and Watson (2007) acknowledged “DAFI has been and remains today, by and large, the only option widely available for refugees to continue tertiary education” (p. 7). While this statement is correct in regards to DAFI being the only widely available option, other refugee education programs are being established.

#### *2.1.3.1 Refugee education along the Thai-Burma Border.*

In 1996 the Coordinating Committee for Displaced People in Thailand (CCSDPT) conducted an assessment survey within the TBB camps to determine the education needs of refugees in the camps. The outcome of the assessment was agreement by the RTG of the establishment of structured educational initiatives by international NGOs in the camps (S. Oh, Ochalumthan, La, & Htoo, 2005; ZOA Refugee Care, 2006). ZOA, the Dutch international NGO conducted subsequent education surveys of the TBB camps in 2000 and 2002 (S. Oh, et al., 2005).

Within the Mae La and Umpiem Mai camps which are predominantly inhabited by refugees of the Karen ethnic group of Burma, the education system is administered by the Karen Refugee Committee Education Entity (KRC-EE), the

education department of the exiled government, and the Karen National Union (KNU) (S. Oh & Van Der Stouwe, 2008). Approximately 38,000 refugee children and youth were enrolled in refugee school programs inside the TBB camps in the 2007-2008 academic year (S. Oh & Van Der Stouwe, 2008). MacLaren (2008c) notes that in the warehoused TBB camps, primary and secondary education is entrenched yet the provision of higher education remains almost non-existent in line with the provision of this level of education to refugees worldwide.

There are several barriers and constraints to the delivery of higher education to refugees on the TBB. In a 2008 report, Purnell and Kengchuncorn (2008) described the lack of permission to attend courses and the lack of accredited qualifications that can be used to demonstrate the content and level of any prior learning as two of the main areas that serve as barriers to refugee access to higher education. Van der Stouwe and Oh (2008) indicate in 2008 the RTG permitted eight refugee students to leave the camps to study in Thai universities paving the way for further refugees in the future. However Van der Stouwe and Oh (2008) note in relation to an in situ model of higher education that “access to distance education in the camps is more complicated, as more players are involved and RTG approval for internet access is required (a politically sensitive issue)” (p. 49). Internet access is a main constraint to delivery of in situ online learning for refugees in the TBB camps.

In a report of their field mission to the TBB camps in May 2008, the Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children recommended allowing Internet access in and around the camps to benefit refugees and local Thai communities. The commission asserted this would “significantly increase opportunities for young people in the camps and local Thai communities through access to information, resources such as scholarships and grants and distance learning

opportunities” (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2008, p. 6).

However, despite ongoing requests by NGOs, in 2010, Internet access was still not permitted by the RTG in the TBB camps.

There are precedents for the provision of Internet access inside refugee and IDP camps in other locations of protracted forced migration crises. In 2005 in the Jordanian Madaba refugee camp, funds provided by the US Ambassador's Refugee Fund enabled a women's Internet centre to be established allowing refugee women to access information, emails and market handicrafts (Dabu, 2005). Since March 2007 in IDP camps in Uganda, Internet access has been available in seven IDP camps, with plans to extend the network to an additional 73 IDP camps (Oxfam Australia, 2010). Also in Uganda, GSMA<sup>23</sup> developed a program connecting refugee camps in northern Uganda to mobile networks. The purpose of the program was...

...to support family reunification, education, healthcare, economic activity and other needs. GSMA in partnership with the UNHCR provides refugees with affordable and sustainable access to a wide range of services from voice calls to Internet access to electronic learning programmes (Jurrien, 2007, p. 1).

In Tanzania, the Kasulu Internet Project (KIP) based in Kasulu township and the Mtabila refugee camp provides Internet access for secondary students through the Community Internet Centers (CICs) inside the Mtabila refugee camp. The building has been outfitted with a 20 kWh solar power system to generate electricity, a VSAT<sup>24</sup> workstation to receive Internet access via satellite and 10 computers (Global Catalyst Foundation, 2010). In Kenya, refugee-owned Internet cafes have been set up inside

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<sup>23</sup> GSMA is the global trade association for mobile operators

<sup>24</sup> VSAT, an abbreviation for Very Small Aperture Terminal, is a two-way satellite ground station with a less than 3 meters tall dish antenna stationed. The transmission rates of VSATs are usually from very low and up to 4 Megabits per second. VSATs' access satellites in geosynchronous orbit and relay data from terminals on earth to other terminals and hubs (Top Bits, 2010).

Kakuma refugee camp (IRRI, 2009). In 2009 the UNHCR in partnership with Microsoft and Portuguese energy company EDP announced three pilot Community Technology Access (CTA) centres, using solar power and providing rugged PC solutions and Internet access, to be built at refugee camps in Bangladesh and Rwanda. The consortium also announced “under the second phase of the project, starting in 2010, a further 19 centres will be established at camps in nine more countries” (UNHCR, 2009, p. 1).

In May 2010, Dundalk Institute of Technology initiated an accredited distance education pilot program in social science called ‘Global Border Studies’ for refugees in the Nu Po refugee camp (Dundalk Institute of Technology, 2010). This program remains the only *accredited* higher education program for refugees on the TBB delivered *inside* a camp<sup>25</sup> but due to the refusal of the RTG to allow Internet access in the TBB camps the Dundalk program must be based on a face-to-face model of education delivery. Finally, in 2011, JRS announced that refugees in Kakuma refugee camp in north-western Kenya were being provided with access to higher education as a result of a partnership between JRS and American universities under the project title *Jesuit Commons - Higher Education at the Margins (JC-HEM)*<sup>26</sup>. The project is described as...

...Using the expertise of Jesuit universities and JRS field staff, the programme will use the internet, online learning techniques and on-site teachers to offer an accredited Diploma in Liberal Studies course as well

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<sup>25</sup> This feature distinguishes the Dundalk Institute of Technology program from the ACU, OUA and Jesuit university programs which are delivered in a village close to the Mae La camp.

<sup>26</sup> JC-HEM is a partnership initiative between Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and Jesuit Commons (JC). In the pilot phase of the programme, ending in August 2014, more than 1,500 refugees are expected to participate in Kakuma (Kenya) and Dzaleka (Malawi) refugee camps, and in Aleppo (Syria).

as Certificates of learning, known as Community Service Learning Tracks (CSLTs) (Jesuit Refugee Service East Africa, 2011, p. 1).

## ***2.2 Conclusion***

This chapter has introduced the reader to the topic of refugees and refugee education. The aim of the chapter was to set the scene for this study by concisely defining and categorising refugees, identifying the issues relating to the forced migration crisis on the TBB and highlighting the lack of higher education programs for refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of forced migration crises. The following chapter provides a review of literature on social capital, communities of practice and blended learning which are used in this study in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 as theoretical lenses to explore and analyse the role and contribution of each concept in overcoming complexities in the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.

## CHAPTER 3 - REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance.*

Confucius

The purpose of the following review of literature is to identify and analyse prior “published and unpublished work from secondary sources in the areas of specific interest to the researcher” (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001, p. 57). For this study the areas of interest include theories of *social capital*, *communities of practice* and *blended learning*. Literature will show how education and social capital have been inherently linked from the earliest description of the concept by Hanifan (1916). Bonding, bridging and linking types of social capital will be described and aspects of trust and reciprocity will be explored within social capital literature. Literature on communities of practice will define the concept, describe components of joint enterprise, shared repertoires and mutual engagement and show how these dimensions enable groups (communities) of individuals with a shared passion to improve their function over time as they interact regularly through social engagement. Finally, blended learning will be defined within distance, open, distributed and online learning education models and literature reviewed to identify characteristics which make blended learning a context-appropriate model for the provision of higher education for refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises.

By placing related theory and research into context (Singleton Jr & Straits, 1999), the outcome of this review of literature is a clearer understanding of the variables of research as they relate to their role and contribution in enabling attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.

### 3.1 Social Capital

The introduction into literature of the concept of *social capital* is generally attributed to Lyda Judson Hanifan (Harriss, 2002). In his widely quoted 1916 text, *The Rural School Community Center*, Hanifan described social capital as...

...goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit, the rural community, whose logical center is the school....The individual is helpless socially, if left to himself...If he comes into contact with his neighbor, and they with other neighbors, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community (Hanifan, 1916, p. 130).

However, seven years earlier at the 1909 National Negro Conference in New York, philosopher and educator, John Dewey declared...

...All points of skill are represented in every race, from the inferior individual to the superior individual, and a society that does not furnish the environment and education and the opportunity of all kinds which will bring out and make effective the superior ability wherever it is born, is not merely doing an injustice to that particular race and to those particular individuals, but it is doing an injustice to itself for it is depriving itself of just that much of *social capital* (Farr, 2004, p. 18).

According to Hytten and Bettez (2011), Dewey's participatory vision of democracy is grounded in education environments which empower historically marginalised people, challenge inequitable social arrangements and institutions, and offer strategies and visions for creating a more just world. Bell (1997) describes this as education for social justice where there is "both a process and a goal" with the ultimate aim being "full and

equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs” (p. 3). Murrell (2006) argues that social justice involves “a disposition toward recognizing and eradicating all forms of oppression and differential treatment extant in the practices and policies of institutions, as well as a fealty to participatory democracy as the means of this action” (p. 81).

Returning to the discussion of social capital from social justice, Farr (2004) suggests if the use of ‘social capital’ by Dewey...

...had been attended by an elaboration or used in a title as Hanifan would...it is hard to imagine that he [Dewey] would not have long since been noticed as the first or most prominent twentieth-century user of the term (and concept). Yet, elaboration, title, or prior notice notwithstanding, the term is there; the concept is omnipresent in his writings. (p. 19).

Interestingly, both Hanifan’s and Dewey’s early references to social capital mean that “the concept, although forgotten for over 50 years, actually predates the notion of human capital” (Paxton, 1999, p. 92).

Social capital gained renewed interest some 60 years after Hanifan’s description through the theoretical development of the concept in the works of Pierre Bourdieu (1983), James Coleman (1988, 1994) and Robert Putnam (1993; 1995; 2000). Bourdieu (1983) described three types of capital: *economic*, *cultural* and *social* and indicated social capital to be a resource linked to having a network of relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. According to Portes (2000), Bourdieu noted that “people intentionally built their relations for the benefits they would bring later” (p. 2). Coleman (1988, 1994) looked at social capital’s role in the creation of human capital. He described the role social capital plays in the family and the community in the creation of human capital in the next generation by illustrating the effect of the lack

of social capital available to high school students who dropped out of school prior to graduation. Pelling and High (2005) differentiate the views of social capital by Bourdieu and Coleman by stating that Bourdieu...

...sees social capital as a good consciously maintained by individuals (and whose meaning and power for social division is socially constructed), Coleman conceives of social capital as a largely unintentional outcome of social processes and interaction (p. 309).

Putnam (1993; 1995; 2000) brought the concept of social capital to a wider readership in his seminal works '*Bowling alone: America's declining social capital*' (1995) and '*Bowling alone: The collapse and the revival of American community*' (2000) in which he surmised that the level of social capital available for collective advantage in America was decreasing as Americans became more individualistic with less voluntary association.

Putnam (2000) defined social capital as the...

...connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them (p. 19).

These connections or relationships...

...enable participants to act more effectively to pursue shared objectives (1995, pp. 664-665) and have an effect on the productivity of the community or features of social organisation, such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (2000, pp. 1-2).

Putnam (1993) argued that horizontally organised networks contribute to the formation of social capital and vertical networks inhibit it. Krishna and Shreder (2002) indicate that Putnam's preference for horizontal rather than vertical or hierarchical

network structures is open to challenge as “empirical investigations carried out in a variety of countries indicate that horizontal networks do not necessarily reveal the presence of greater social capital” (p. 21). Putnam’s definition is however, preferred in this study as it sets out the *context* (individuals, community or organisation), *aspects* (networks, norms and trust), *processes* (facilitating coordination and cooperation) and *outcome* (mutual benefit). Each of these elements is explored in depth in this thesis in Chapters 7, 8 and 9. Furthermore, Putnam (1993) noted...

...social capital to be what the social philosopher Albert Hirschman calls a ‘moral resource’, that is, a resource whose supply increases rather than decreases through use and which (unlike physical capital) becomes depleted if *not* used (p. 4).

This view is supported by Ostrom (2000) who points out “social capital does not wear out with use but rather with disuse” (p. 179).

Portes (2000) described how a...

...subtle transition took place as the concept was exported into other disciplines where social capital became an attribute of the community itself. In this new garb, its benefits accrued not so much to individuals as to the collectivity (p. 3).

Furthermore, Portes (2000) notes that social capital “as a property of cities or nations is qualitatively distinct from its individual version, a fact that explains why the respective literatures have diverged” (p. 3). This is particularly evident when the reader considers the definition of social capital offered by the World Bank (1998) as...

...The institutions, the relationships, the attitudes and values that govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development. Social capital, however, is not simply the sum of institutions which underpin society, it is also the glue that holds them

together. It includes the shared values and rules for social conduct expressed in personal relationships, trust, and a common sense of ‘civic’ responsibility that makes society more than just a collection of individuals (p. 5).

It should be noted that critiques of the use of social capital by the World Bank are also common. For example, Fine (2007) leads by describing “the reduction of the impact of social capital to the activities of a few scholars within the World Bank is at best partial and at worst misleading” (p. 571). Apart from criticisms of the use of social capital by the World Bank, other critiques of the concept which the researcher or practitioner needs to be aware of include the concept’s broad definition (Durlauf, 2002; Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002), its poor conceptualisation, consensus on how to measure the concept (F. Fukuyama, 1999; Fabio Sabatini, 2009), failure to address the gender dimension of social capital, application to different types of problems and unit of analysis (Portes, 2000). The issue of ‘circularity’ (Schuller, Baron, & Field, 2000) whereby the concept is used as an explanatory variable and a descriptor for the same phenomenon is yet another critique of social capital.

Regarding broadness of definition and conceptualisation, Fine (2007) forthrightly surmises social capital as having become ‘definitionally chaotic’ (p. 569). Generally, the “lack of agreed upon and established definition of social capital, combined with its multidisciplinary appeal (See (Woolcock, 2001)) has led to the spontaneous growth of different interpretations of the concept”(Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002 p. 2). Farr (2004) informs the reader that “scarcely an article on social capital begins without complaining about the semantic fallout from this situation” (p. 7).

It is hardly surprising that different interpretations occur when numerous authors (Adam & Roncevic, 2004; Bebbington, 2006; de Jong, 2010; R. D. Putnam, 1995; Silverman, 2004) misrepresent the fundamental description of social capital offered by Hanifan (1920) as “those tangible substances [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families” (p. 130). Any reader of such quotes should immediately ask, “Surely Hanifan means *intangible* rather than tangible?” Indeed, Hanifan preemptively indicated...

...I make no reference to the usual acceptation of the term capital, except in a figurative sense. I do not refer to real estate, or to personal property or to cold cash, but rather to that in life which tends to make these tangible substances count for most in the daily lives of a people, namely, good-will...(p. 130).

A fundamental contention of social capital posed by economists is the use of the term ‘*capital*’ (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002). This is a result of non-economists being credited with coining the term social capital. Grootaert and Van Bastelaer (2002) provide reference to Arrow (2000) as a case in point of an economist who “has urged the abandonment of the concept of social capital, largely on the basis that it does not meet the definition of capital used by economists” (p. 4). Along similar lines, Bowles and Gintis (2002) believe that the term capital should be replaced by community as “it better captures the aspects of good governance that explain social capital’s popularity, as it focuses attention on what groups do rather than what people own” (p. 422). Hean (2003) notes that while each dimension of social capital contributes to the overall meaning of the concept, each dimension alone cannot capture fully the concept and the question of whether social capital is a dependent, independent or intermediary variable still remains (Adam & Roncevic, 2003).

Grootaert and Van Bastelaer (2002) highlight another potential weakness of using social capital, particularly in research and development programs in that the concept may be “too broad to draw specific conclusions about the role of attitudes, behaviours, or structures” (p. 5). Sabatini (2007) notes that the use of indirect indicators of social capital do not represent the concept’s key components identified by theoretical literature. Their use causes...

...a considerable confusion about what social capital *is*, as distinct from its *outcomes*, and what the relationship between social capital and its outcomes *may be* (Osborne, Sankey, & Wilson, 2007, p. 7).

Catts (2007) argues that social capital may be “misused to conceal the effects of economic capital and power, and may reinforce a culture of ‘blame’ on those who fail to observe middle-class norms” (p. 16).

Due to social capital being a relatively new, multifaceted and imprecise concept, measuring social capital and its effects is extremely difficult (Productivity Commission, 2003). Catts (2007) notes that reported correlations with desired outcomes of social policy “do not provide a causal explanation for why measures of social capital are correlated with desired outcomes” (p. 17). Catts (2007) argues that in using quantitative indicators of social capital “one must first define the construct and then the purpose for which measurement is to occur” (p. 18). Putnam (2000) suggests that as social capital does not change rapidly the concept is best measured over decades so that any substantial changes which have occurred can be clearly identified. However, to test that real change is happening, Catts (2007) suggest that “we need surveys that have been administered regularly and over a long period of time” (p. 21). In addressing the critique of measuring social capital, Sabatini (2007) notes that

problems of measurement of the concept are “at some level, endemic to all empirical work in economics” (p. 80).

Smith (2007), similar to Fukuyama (1999), believes a majority of discussion on social capital have failed to properly address the issue of gender. Smith argues that as shown in the works of Skocpol (2003), Bookman (2004) and others, “the way in which women engage and create local networks, and have to manage caring often falls beneath the radar of social capital researchers and theorists” (pp. 12-13).

In essence for social capital to exist, the relationships built between individuals should facilitate access to the resources of the collective. According to Portes (2000) both Bourdieu and Coleman centred on individuals or small groups as units of analysis and argued that social capital is social in character as it does not reside *in individuals* but rather *in relations between individuals* (Van Oorschot, Arts, & Gelissen, 2006). This is of interest for this study as it seeks to explore the role of the RETC in the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB. For example, Bourdieu (, 1992 cited in Adam & Roncevic, 2003) indicates that social capital would be “operationalised as the sum of the resources attainable through a network of more or less institutionalized relations” (p. 164). Putnam (2000) also described social capital as “connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (p. 19) and introduced obligations and expectations, information channels and social norms as the three main aspects of social relations which help build resources for individuals (Putnam, 1993; 1995). This study will attempt to show that the connections between individuals such as members of the RTEC, academics from ACU, refugee education practitioners on the TBB and refugees themselves, have been strengthen through the formation of trust (see Chapter

3, Section 3.1.2.1) has contributed to the accumulation of resources and access to higher education for refugees on the TBB.

As a summary for precautionary use of social capital for researchers, Pelling and High's (2005) assertion that “the context dependent nature of social capital means it will be difficult to entirely escape from methodological pluralism and individual studies will have to choose the analytical categories they see fit” (p. 313) is well grounded.

### *3.1.1 Categorising Social Capital*

Several authors have attempted to categorise social capital according to high-level conceptual dimensions. For example, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2001b) distinguish four broad approaches to the concept of social capital:

- *Economic* - literature focuses on individuals' incentives to interact with others and, out of self-interest, to invest in social capital resources while another explores the design and effects of formal and informal institutions;
- *Political* - science literature places an emphasis on the role of institutions and political and social norms in shaping human behaviour;
- *Sociological* - literature, from its analysis of the social determinants of human motivation, brings a focus on features of social organisation such as trust, reciprocity and networks of civic engagement; and

- *Anthropological* - literature develops the notion that humans have natural instincts for association, providing a biological basis for social order.

Other authors such as Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) categorise social capital according to three high-level dimensions: *structural*, *relational* and *cognitive*.

Structural describes impersonal patterns of ties between people, relational describes personal relationships which influence people's behaviour and cognitive which describes resources such as shared representations, interpretations and systems of meaning. Newton (1999) also argues that there are *subjective* structural and *cultural* dimensions to social capital where the subjective structural dimension consists of social networks of institutionalized positive relationships and the subjective cultural dimension consists of a set of values and attitudes of individuals relating to trust, reciprocity and willingness to cooperate.

Social capital has also been categorised on a *practical* (Woolcock, 2001) and *dimensional* level (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). On a practical level, social capital can be of three types according to Woolcock (2001): *Bonding* – relations between family, close friends and neighbours; *Bridging* – relations between distant friends, associates and colleagues; and *Linking* – relations with sympathetic individuals in positions of power. Bonding and bridging take on a horizontal structure while linking is vertical. Linking is of significance in enabling refugee higher learning, particularly its key function of the “capacity to leverage resources, ideas and information from formal institutions beyond the community” (Woolcock, 2001, p. 72; . World Bank, 2000).

The vertical structure of linking social capital identified by Woolcock (2001) raises the question whether or not Putnam's (1993) description of social

capital as “a set of horizontal associations among people” should state “horizontal and vertical associations”. Whichever the case, by exploring social capital using a multidimensional approach is beneficial for as Woolcock (2001) argues, “it is different combinations of bonding, bridging and linking social capital which incorporate a dynamic component in which optimal combinations change over time” (p. 72). Field (2003) agrees and believes the “different combinations of the three types of social capital will produce different outcomes” (p. 43).

A further categorisation of social capital is offered by Ostrom and Anh (2003) who categorise views of social capital as *minimalist*, *transitionalist* or *expansionist*. The minimalist view treats social capital as a function of network correlations within a unit, the transitionalist looks at social capital as a public good and the function it performs and the expansionist view relates social capital to collective action and public policy.

The final categorisation of social capital described in this review of literature is the categorisation offered by Brunie (2009) who applies a *relational*, *collective* and *generalized* approach to understanding the concept of social capital. Brunie (2009) believes that social capital is a useful umbrella concept, but there is an urgent need to break it down into more concrete and manageable elements that directly correspond to various aspects of social life. By focusing on these category elements it is possible to develop...

...a more systematic and precise way to identify which attributes and properties of social interactions are valuable for specific outcomes, and enhance the comparability of results across contexts and issue areas (Brunie, 2009).

Relational social capital refers to the ability of an individual, group or organisation to mobilise their social contacts in order to resource value to them. Collective social capital refers to density of interactions and consists of networks and generally accepted attitudes, rules of behaviour, shared values and norms of reciprocity and trust. Small, homogenous and exclusive groups facilitate the denseness in interactions in this category of social capital. Generalized social capital is based on individual's attitudes and behaviours that influence how people relate to each other as trust is not built by a group but rather trust is built by the group's members who acquire particular values and attitudes (Brehm & Rahn, 1997). A useful summary of the conceptual differences between the relational, collective and generalized approaches to social capital is presented in Figure 3<sup>27</sup>.

	Relational approach	Collective approach	Generalized approach
Level of manifestation	Networks of individuals, groups, or organizations	Small, relatively homogenous, and exclusive groups	Social capital as individual attribute
Aspect of social life	Relationships an actor develops and maintains with other actors	Quality of the relationships among actors within a group	Individual attitudes and predispositions towards others, and sometimes institutions
Dimensions emphasized	Resources embedded in personal networks Social relationships that provide access to resources	Density of interactions	Societal norms
Core processes	Differential access to and ability to mobilize valued resources via the mobilization of social contacts	Social capital defined in relation to its function as factors that facilitate cooperation: – Thick mutual trust – Norms of reciprocity – Networks	Generalized trust influences how people relate to each other
Utility	Activities primarily benefit actor (individual or corporate) Also facilitates the functioning of social and political life (network view)	Group-specific activity that cannot be pursued individually (e.g., collective action), but the features supporting social capital also facilitate individual benefits	Social good that binds society together and encourages civic behaviors
Fungibility across domains	Limited because use value of resources and network characteristics is issue specific	Limited to activities that require similar patterns of expectation and organization	Fungible

**Figure 3: Conceptual differences between the three perspectives of social capital.**

(Source: (Brunie, 2009, p. 253)).

### 3.1.2 Dimensions of Social Capital

Social capital is frequently used as a framework for understanding various social issues in temporal communities, neighborhoods and groups. Researchers in

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<sup>27</sup> The term ‘fungibility’ used in Figure 3 refers to exchangeability: the quality of being capable of exchange or interchange (The Free Online Dictionary, 2009).

the social sciences and the humanities have used social capital to understand trust, shared understanding, reciprocal relationships, social network structures, common norms and cooperation, and the roles these entities play in various aspects of temporal communities. The categorisation of social capital leads to further deconstruction of the concept into dimensions. It is important therefore, that the dimensions of social capital be understood and defined as...

...an idea that draws attention to the importance of social relationships and values such as trust in shaping broader attitudes and behaviour is clearly highly attractive to many people (B. Daniel, Schwier, & McCalla, 2003, p. 1).

Three core dimensions of social capital identified in literature are *Trust* (Barber, 1983; Fukuyama, 1995; F. Fukuyama, 1999; Russell Hardin, 1996; Putnam, 1993; Robbins & Langton, 2003); *Reciprocity* (Gouldner, 1960; Molm, 2010) and *Norms* (Baland & Platteau, 1996; Bulte & Horan, 2010; Esser, 2008; Fukuyama, 1995). Reciprocity and trust in particular are key elements of pro-social behaviour; a behaviour characterised by exchanges of favours between non-related individuals (Camerer, 2003).

### 3.1.2.1 *Trust.*

Trust has a “constellation of synonyms – mutuality, empathy, reciprocity, civility, respect, solidarity, toleration and fraternity” (K Newton, 2001, p. 203). Regardless of synonym used, trust is an essential dimension of social capital (Putnam, 1993). Fukuyama (1995) defines trust as “the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of that community” (p. 26). Beem (1999) argues that without these shared set of values, virtues, and expectations within society as a

whole “trust decays; at a certain point, this decay begins to manifest itself in serious social problems” (p. 20). The need for trust stems from the lack of detailed knowledge about others’ *abilities* and *motivation* to act as promised (Deutsch, 1958). The formalisation of a trusting relationship therefore occurs where *A* trusts *B* to do *X* (Kohn, 2008).

Trust is “one of the most important synthetic forces in society” (Simmel, 1950, p. 326) and involves the continual accumulation and updating of experience (Russell Hardin, 1996). Newton (1999, in Van Oorschot, 2006) describes as a typical chicken-and-egg problem how literature has “yet to clearly identify whether formal or informal social networks instill in individuals the capacity to trust and reciprocate or whether it is the other way round” (p. 151). Uslaner (2002) and Rothstein (Rothstein, 2005; 2005) argue inequality affects trust rather than the other way around.

Much of the discourse on trust has focused on trying to understand which circumstances promote trust and which circumstances stifle it (Kohn, 2008). Trust, like love, is involuntary according to Kohn (2008) where “you can’t help whether you love or trust someone; you either do or you don’t” (p. 9). Trust is usually conditional and limited but may be unconditional, although this is less common outside the special relationships between parents and young children (Kohn, 2008). Not all accounts of trust (see (Barber, 1983; Gambetta, 1988)) include reference to the *trusted*’s interest in being trustworthy toward the *truster*. There is merely an expectation that the *trusted* will fulfill the trust. Therefore, according to Hardin (2002) a fully rational analysis of trust depends “not solely on rational expectations of the *truster* but also on the commitments, not merely the regularity, of the *trusted*” (p.4).

Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) place trust and trustworthiness within the structural category of social capital. Paxton (2007) notes that the majority of studies of trust remain at the individual level without considering the larger social and institutional structures in which trust is embedded. Alesina (2002) distinguishes between two types of variables correlated with trust: individual characteristics, such as age, gender, race; and characteristics of the community in which the individual lives. Goddard (2003) argues that for individuals participating in relationships where there is a high level of social trust, there is most likely open exchange of information and individuals will act with caring and benevolence towards one another compared to individuals in relationships lacking trust. Breton and Wintrobe (1982) note that in a complex, mobile and relatively impersonal society that large investments in trust in a smaller number of intensive relationships are unusual.

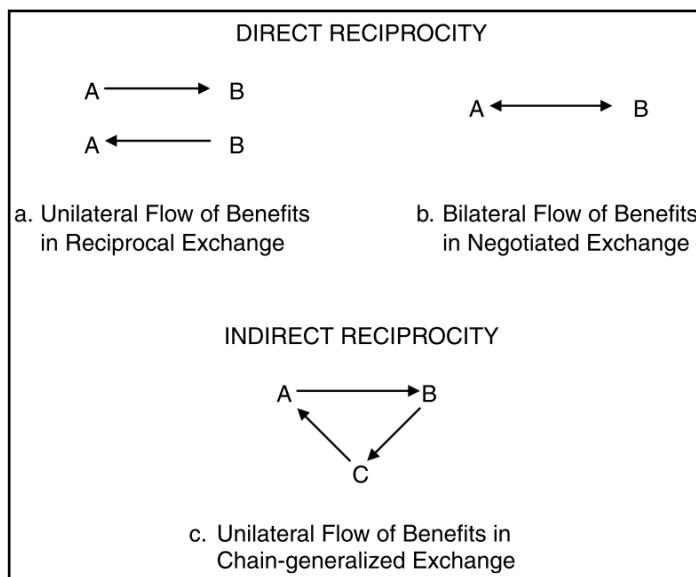
The issue of trust arises between individuals viewed as rational, free, and equal (Kohn, 2008). The association between trust and relationships has evolved over millennia according to Kohn (2008). Since pre-historic times people have tended to interact with and trust small numbers of other people in their own group and have tended to have limited contact with outsiders. In the modern world the reverse is becoming increasingly common. Furthermore, the numbers of people within the inner family circle have decreased which has impacted on the dynamics of trust. Van den Bos (2010) found that trust and reciprocal decisions for adults are not only dependent upon their own outcome but also on the consequences for the other.

### *3.1.2.2 Reciprocity.*

Reciprocity is defined as “a principle or practice of give-and-take...” (The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary, 1984, p. 575) and “...the conditional behavior

to return helpful and harmful acts in kind, even when this is costly for the reciprocator” (Stanca, 2009, p. 191). Reciprocity is a universal social phenomenon subject to cultural variation which has been found to be a useful catalyst of exchange and social relations (Gouldner, 1960). Reciprocity can explain the persistence of cooperative actions in the absence of immediate incentives to cooperate (Hoffman, McCabe, & Smith, 2006) and has “long been identified in natural and social sciences as an important mechanism in the evolution of cooperation” (Stanca, 2009, p. 190).

The structure of reciprocity may be direct or indirect as shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: The Structure of Reciprocity.**

(Source: (Molm, 2010, p. 121)).

Direct reciprocity is sequential whereby if A helps B then B helps A. For indirect reciprocity, Stanca (2009) describes generalized and social forms. Generalized indirect reciprocity occurs if A helps B then B helps C and social indirect reciprocity occurs if A helps B then C helps A . Stanca (2009) found generalized indirect reciprocity to be significantly stronger than social indirect reciprocity and direct reciprocity. For each type of reciprocity in repeated interactions, reciprocal relations

can be strategic if it is motivated by the expectation of positive net benefits in the long run (Stanca, 2009).

Mathie and Cunningham (2003) make the significant point that similar to the way in which material assets require regulatory and legal environments in order to be realised as negotiable capital, social assets can only be realised in environments that share similar expectations of trust and reciprocity. While, Woolcott and Narayan (2000) indicate...

...Weak, hostile, or indifferent governments have a profoundly different effect on community life and development projects, for example, than do governments that respect civil liberties, uphold the rule of law, honor contracts, and resist corruption (p. 227).

Woolcott and Narayan (2000) also indicate that for social capital to be realised social trust and transactional norms need to be established.

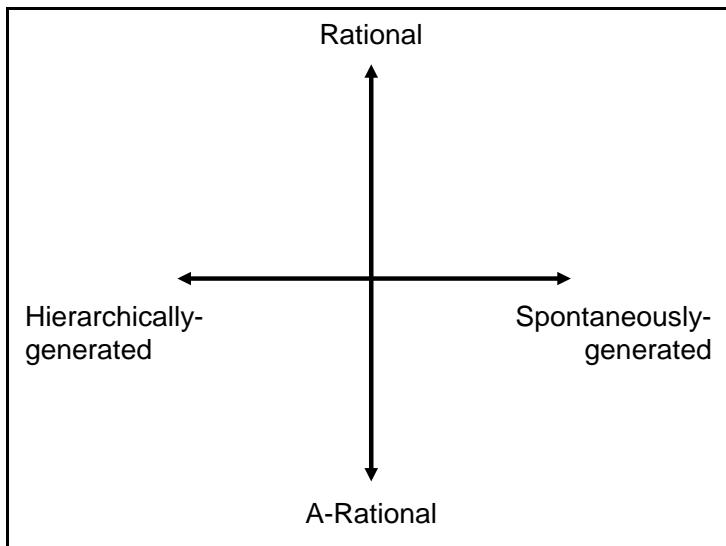
### *3.1.2.3 Norms or Values.*

According to Fukuyama (2001), social capital consists of “norms or values, instantiated in an actual relationship among two or more people, that promote cooperation between them” (p. 480). A *norm* is defined as a “recognized type, standard” (The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary, 1984, p. 462). Finnemore (1996) defines norms as “shared expectations about appropriate behaviour held by a community of actors. Unlike ideas which may be held privately, norms are shared and social”. (p. 22). Norms may not be easy to recognise as they are so internalized and taken for granted that violations do not occur (M. Finnemore, 1996). Furthermore, there is no argument that norms in the various issue areas might be patterned or related to another in a coherent way.

Finnemore (2004) places intervention norms and their implications for policy into a discussion of normative theory and ethics. Finnemore (2004) argues that over time some normative claims have become less powerful or have disappeared entirely whereas other claims about human rights appear to be increasingly powerful and now “challenge assertions about sovereignty and self-determination that were the trump cards of international normative discourse thirty years ago” (p. 6). It is also suggested by Finnemore (2004) that humanitarianism—its influence and definition—is bound up in other normative changes, particularly sovereignty norms and human rights...

...Mutually reinforcing and consistent norms appear to strengthen one another and it is important not to view norms as individual things floating atomistically in some international social space but rather as part of a highly structured social context (p. 57).

Norms are expectations and beliefs about how one should behave (Baland & Platteau, 1996). One aim of social norms is the efficient control of a members’ behaviour within a collectivity (Esser, 2008). Norms may develop as a result of being mandated where institutions are the source of social rules or they may develop as a spontaneous act where society itself is the source of those rules (Fukuyama, 2001). Both mandated and spontaneous norms do not exist in a pure form according to Fukuyama (2001) as mandated norms usually undergo evolution within the communities they apply to and spontaneously generated norms are categorised then enforced through formal political institutions. Putnam (2000) asserts that bridging groups of social networks enhance a number of important personal traits such as civic norms. Violating the norm is intrinsically costly as it causes feelings of guilt and shame (Bulte & Horan, 2010). An additional feature of norms is that they can be rational or a-rational as shown in Figure 5.



**Figure 5: Universe of Norms Matrix.**

(Source: (Fukuyama, 2001)).

It is Fukuyama's (2001) view that most theories of norm generation can fit within the Universe of Norms Matrix. This view is empirically supported in studies by Zmerli (2010) and Denters (2007) in which the impact of social capital varies in accordance with the norm dimension. However, Lin (1999) argues that norms and values are disjoined from social capital as they can be seen either as causes and/ or effects of social capital, but not as one of its features. While, Finnemore (1996) notes that “skepticism about the causal and constitutive force of norms and our ability to investigate them empirically is widespread” (p. 130).

Krishan and Shrader (2002) indicate any tool for measuring social capital must “recognize and be sensitive to cultural variation but it must also provide a common conceptual framework that helps unify the different dimensions of social capital” (p. 19). They believe that the structural elements of social capital (networks, roles, rules and precedents) must be assessed separately from cognitive elements (norms, values, attitudes and beliefs) and that it is necessary for both elements to be

combined to “represent the aggregate potential for mutually beneficial collective action that exists within a community” (p. 19).

### *3.1.3 Social Capital and Refugees*

The refugee experience is that trust, cooperation and shared networks - their social capital - has been shattered (Fielding & Anderson, 2008). In re-building the social capital of refugee communities, it is important to address both horizontal and vertical links. Horizontal links refer to: Bonding social capital – strong ties connecting family members, close friends and relatives. Refugees identify strongly with the bonding social capital that reflected their community then and there. Bridging social capital – is less strong but equally important ties between people or groups who are in similar economic and political positions, but in different locations, occupations or ethnic groups. Bridging social capital was present in original communities of refugees but differences were manipulated and used to create divisions in the society (Fielding & Anderson, 2008). Distinguishing between the three types is important in understanding the plight of the poor (or refugees in this study) as such groups have close-knit and extensive stock of bonding social capital, a modest endowment of bridging social capital and almost no linking social capital enabling them to gain sustained access to formal institutions (Woolcock, 2001). This suggests an opportunity for less formal organisations (such as the RTEC) to advocate for sustained formal access to higher education for refugees on the TBB.

Loizos (2000) notes “although refugees very often lose their economic and material capital, they rarely lose nearly as much of their human and social capital. Even when their stocks of both are greatly reduced, or devalued by dramatic changes in contexts where they could be applied, the refugees may with time, determination, and support, replenish them” (p. 126). When they arrive in a country of asylum,

refugees bring with them their knowledge, skills, qualifications and life experiences. The UNHCR describes these components as social capital (UNHCR, 2008d). In a blueprint for establishing livelihoods for refugees in countries of asylum the UNHCR suggest where they are unable to do so, refugees may benefit from grants and loans to kick-start income-generating activities, as well as training packages to support small business start-ups, secondary education, vocational training and technical education (UNHCR, 2008d). Accredited university-level higher education however, is not considered.

### *3.1.4 Social Capital and Education*

Apart from Hanifan (1916; 1920) and Dewey (1916) applying the concept of social capital within an educational context as far back as 1916, Wicket (2007) noted more recently that there is growing recognition of learning as a central driver in the building of social capital. Associations between social capital and education have been investigated in the contexts of vocational and educational training (VET) (Kilpatrick, 2003), early childhood education (A. Farrell, Tayler, & Tennent, 2004) and non-formal education (Shrestha, Wilson, & Singh, 2008). For indigenous learners, positive outcomes from participation in education and training have been recognised as adult language, literacy and numeracy (Balatti, Black, & Falk, 2007; Black, Falk, & Balatti, 2007; McGrath, 2007).

Balatti and Falk (2002) note “social capital—its networks, trust, and shared values—emerges as the missing link in explaining the integrated role of knowledge and identity resources in generating adult learning benefits” (p. 281). Putnam (1993) indicates the networks that constitute social capital serve as conduits for the flow of helpful information that facilitates achieving our goals. There is a sense of moral

action in the role of social capital development through the provision of higher learning to disadvantaged and under-served populations.

Helliwell and Putnam (2007) used a quantitative approach to identify the effects of education on the social capital construct of trust. They found “large and pervasive positive effects of general education increases on levels of trust and participation” and that education “increases rather than merely redistributing social capital” (p. 5). In response to the research question “What is the importance of social capital in determining the processes of learning?” the OECD (2001a) found a lack of social capital impedes learning.

For schools-based research, Catts (2007) suggests that it may be useful to consider multiple categories of social capital. These categories are family unit, neighbourhood, school and institutional. However, in exploring these categorisations of social capital immediate issues are raised. For example, Catts (2007) acknowledges that “in extreme cases, some people belong to no family unit, or have at best tenuous access” (p. 24). Distinction between family and neighbourhood is also required as a particular family unit may hold different norms and values to those of others in the immediate neighbourhood” (pp. 24-25). Therefore due to the complexity of the measurement tasks required to undertake quantitative research to inform public policy, Catts (2007) suggests...

...a multivariate and multi-level research model is required to explore both the relative contributions of various forms of social capital...and large scale longitudinal or cross-cohort studies are necessary to make effective use of quantitative methods (p. 25).

The following section of the review of literature discusses Communities of Practice (CoP). To conceptualise how the theories of Social Capital and CoPs are

linked, Lesser and Storck (2001) suggest thinking of a community as “an engine for the development of social capital” and argues that “social capital resident in communities of practice leads to behavioral changes, which in turn positively influence business performance” (p. 831).

### ***3.2 Communities of Practice***

Communities are characterised by having a significant history, a shared cosmology, a common cultural and historical heritage, social interdependence and a reproductive cycle (Barab & Duffy, 2000). Traweek (1988)suggests that communities are...

...a group of people who have a shared past, hope to have a shared future, have some form of acquiring new members, and have some means of recognizing and maintaining differences between themselves and other communities (p. 6).

The importance of activity in fusing individuals to communities, and of communities legitimising individual practices was raised by Lave and Wenger (1991) who defined the term ‘communities of practice (CoP)’ as a “group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger, 2008, p. 1). Furthermore, Lave and Wenger (1991) noted that the...

...[Community does not] imply necessarily co-presence, a well-defined identifiable group, or socially visible boundaries. It does imply participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for the communities (p. 98).

The idealistic view of a community held by Wenger (2008) has been criticised by Fox (2002) who argues that the consideration of positive and negative forces into the collaboration process is lacking.

According to Schlager and Fusco (2003), CoPs are “self-reproducing, emergent and evolving entities that frequently extend beyond formal organisational structures” (p. 3). CoPs should be designed for evolution “because communities are built on existing networks and evolve beyond any particular design, the purpose of a design is not to impose a structure but to help the community develop” (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 53). Communities may emerge naturally or may be created deliberately according to Fontaine (2001). This suggestion is indicative of the development of the ACU TBB program community of academics, students and the RTEC as a result of a vacuum in refugee higher education provision along the TBB as suggested in the problem statement of this thesis (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2).

CoPs have their origin in the theory of Legitimate Peripheral Participation, a process “by which newcomers and oldtimers become a part of a community of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). An assumption underlying CoP theory is that...

...learning occurs not only as a cognitive change in the learner but also as a social trajectory within a group. The social identities of learners change as the learners become recognized as experts within a social group that shares a set of practices (Job-Sluder & Barab, 2004, p. 377).

The iterative nature of improving what a CoP does is for Lave and Wenger a “generative process of CoPs producing their own future” (1991, pp. 57-58). Other variations on the core definition of a CoP exist (Churchman & Stehlik, 2007; Murty,

2008; Roth, 1998) however Wenger’s definition is preferred for this study as the community to be explored (the RTEC) from the perspective of a CoP *is the organisation*, whereas other definitions inherently link the ‘community’ as existing *within an organisation*.

Nickols (2000) indicates CoPs have “been around ever since people in organisations realized they could benefit from sharing their knowledge, insights and experiences with others who have similar interests or goals” (p. 1). Lave and Wenger (1991) provide CoP examples of insurance claims processors and Xerox photocopy machine repair technicians. Through networking and sharing their experiences the claims processors and repair technicians improved their efficiency, effectiveness, created positive customer satisfaction and increased business value for their organisation.

Storberger-Walker (2008) notes CoPs have been interpreted in different ways by scholars and practitioners seeking to take action on or understand diverse social phenomena. Literature describes communities of practitioners in a variety of areas including knowledge management (du Plessis, 2008; Wenger, 2004), a reflexive model of social work research (Moffat, George, Lee, & McGrath, 2005), nurse education (Andrew, Tolson, & Ferguson, 2008), online learning (Moule, 2006), online teacher professional development (M. S. Schlager, Fusco, & Schank, 2002), linguistic variation and change in American high school students (B. Davies, 2005) and in the proposition of a new academic work model for Australian universities (Churchman & Stehlik, 2007).

The choice of methods used to study CoP is also varied. For example, Schwier, Campbell and Kenny (2004) developed grounded theory and gathered primary data through semi-structured interviews in a study of the role of

instructional designers in social and institutional change. Iverson and McPhee (2008) used case studies and semi-structured interviews to examine two groups of volunteers in organisations to “gain a clearer sense of the motivating power and results of CoP membership” (p. 180). Moule (2006) also used case studies to explore online learning CoPs. In a study looking at why CoPs succeed and why they fail, Probst and Borzillo (2008) used perception analysis from interviews of 57 CoP leaders of Fortune 500 organisations and Choi (2006) surveyed 297 subjects in 81 teams to explore factors that facilitated CoP activity.

### *3.2.1 Indicators of Communities of Practice*

There are a range of indicators of a CoP. These include: members having a strong sense of identity tied to the community, the practice of the community being not fully captured in formal procedures, a continuing mutual relationships (which may be harmonious or conflicting) for members of the community, a rapid flow of information between and among members which Nickols (2000) calls a really effective ‘grapevine’ and behaviour patterns which indicate members of the community such as gestures, postures and even seating patterns in meetings.

Wenger (2002) uses an analogy of a heartbeat to describe the rhythm and flow of a community. He explains that most of our lives do have a rhythm, which contributes to its sense of familiarity. Vibrant communities of practice also have a rhythm and the rhythm is the strongest indicator of the community’s aliveness (Wenger, et al., 2002). Finding the right rhythm at each stage is key to a community's development. There is no perfect rhythm for all communities, and the heartbeat of the community changes as the community evolves (Wenger, et al., 2002).

There are three main levels of community participation (Wenger, et al., 2002). The first consists of a core group of members who Wenger (2002) indicates take on leadership roles and become auxiliaries to the community “coordinator”. The second level of participation consists of members described as the ‘active group’. These members attend and participate in meetings but not to the same level of intensity as the core group. The final level of communities is peripheral members. Peripheral members rarely participate but drift into the center as their interests are stirred (Wenger, et al., 2002). The expectation for all members of a community to participate fully is unrealistic according to Wenger (2002) as members have different levels of interest in their communities.

### 3.2.2 *Key Elements of Communities of Practice*

Wenger (2000) identifies three key elements of a CoP: *joint enterprise*, *mutual engagement* and *shared repertoires*. Members of a CoP are bound together by their collectively developed understanding of what their community is about and how they hold each other accountable to this sense of *joint enterprise*. For the joint enterprise element, Wenger (2000) considers members to be considered competent when they understand the enterprise well enough to be able to contribute to it.

Nickols (2000) states that members of a CoP are there to accomplish something on an ongoing basis and see the larger purpose of that work, or in other words have a ‘mission’. Members of a CoP interact with each other establishing norms and relationships as *mutual engagement* and make use of communal resources (*shared repertoires*) such as language, routines, sensibilities, artifacts, tools, stories and styles. Inviting an outsider to give a perspective to the community allows members of the community to better understand the issues inside the community, to have

legitimacy within it, see new possibilities and effectively act as agents of change (Wenger, et al., 2002).

The full value of a community is according to Wenger (2002) rarely evident when it is formed and value often changes over the life of the community. Common, every day, small events are the most valuable community activities such as informal discussions on how to solve a problem (Wenger, et al., 2002). For members to be considered competent in mutual engagement, members must be able to engage with the community and be trusted as a partner in these interactions. Choi (2006), in a study exploring CoPs as alternative learning models of performance training in corporations found the degree of trust within a CoP to be one of the most important factors for sharing tacit knowledge. Raelin (2000) notes CoPs are the most suitable learning method not only for the achievement of tacit knowledge but also implicit knowledge which is passed by practice at a group level rather than a personal level. By combining familiarity and excitement aspects, community members are able to develop the relationships they need to be well connected as well as generate the excitement they need to be fully engaged in a CoP (Wenger, et al., 2002). This enables a deep “sense of the value of participation to the community” through the member “becoming part of the community” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 111). For members of the community to be considered competent in regards to the shared repertoire, members must be given access to the repertoire and be able to use it appropriately (Wenger, 2000). In summary, Westheimer (1998) suggests that the anticipated effects of CoP membership for individuals include...

...a sense of identity and belonging, affirmation, commitment to the group, strong bonds, and the development of both common purposes and collective responsibility (p. 12).

### 3.2.3 *Critiques of Communities of Practice*

Common critiques of CoPs are based on its ‘too’ broad application (Storberger-Walker, 2008) and misunderstanding between CoPs and teams (Lesser & Storck, 2001). Riel and Polin (2004) assert that the act of simply labeling a group of people as a community neither ensures that it functions as one, nor that it is a beneficial, cohesive unit in which learning will take place. Wenger (2010) asserts that the concept in its original formulation was to “view learning as inherent in practice rather than reified in an educational setting” (p. 192). Vann and Bowker (2001) argue however, if the concept of communities of practice becomes a design intention or a prescribed process then it loses the very insights which made it useful. Hughes (2007) suggests that instead of becoming sharper in focus over time the concept is becoming heterogeneous as disconnected groups use it to suit their needs. The diversity of areas in which CoPs have been applied such as a tool for management (Contu and Wilmott 2002), defending tacit knowledge (Duguid 2005) and explaining information flow (Cross et al 2005) have, according to Storberger-Walker (2008) “denigrated the concept of CoP to the point at which academics are justifiably skeptical of its theoretical and analytical strength” (p. 566). Clearly characterising the differences between CoPs and teams overcomes the misunderstanding between the two concepts (Storck & Hill, 2000).

Storck and Hill (2000) indicate team relationships are established when an organisation assigns people to be team members whereas relationships in CoPs are formed around practice; authoritarian relationships within teams are organisationally determined whereas authoritarian relationships in CoPs emerge through interaction around expertise. Team goals are often established by people not on the team (e.g. senior managers) whereas CoPs are only responsible to their members; and work and

reporting processes for teams are organisationally defined whereas CoPs develop their own processes. Furthermore, Murty (2008) believes CoPs are more enduring than a project team, yet more structured than a personal network of contacts.

This review of literature has shown that a CoP is a complex structure. Saint-Onge and Wallace (2003) list the numerous analogies that people use to describe CoPs to highlight the complex nature: “the human body, a beehive, the agricultural cycle, the medieval guild system, or the physical form of communities in which we live and work (villages, towns, cities)” (p. 115). The authors add that although not every CoP has a strategic purpose in and of itself, they do weave a “cohesive network in an unbureaucratic manner that contributes to building an overall capability to collaborate and learn” (p. 116).

The following section of the review of literature discusses blended learning. Blended learning is the third theory used in this study to explore and analyse the attainment of higher education for refugees on the TBB.

### ***3.3 Blended Learning***

Blended learning is a fundamental redesign that transforms the structure and approach to teaching and learning (Garrison & Vaughn, 2008). It is the “latest step in a long history of technology-based training” (Bersin, 2004, p. 2) where the core elements have evolved with technology applications to the point where the blend can now combine face-to-face with email, text messaging, podcasting, blogs, web conferencing tools and other tools in connecting learners to each other and to the instructor (UMass, 2010). However, blended learning’s use is dependent upon on how people understand the concept and what they blend (C. J. Bonk & Graham, 2006) and rather than evaluating the individual components of blended learning in

isolation, it is the interrelation of delivery modes that may be important (Harris, Connolly, & Feeney, 2009).

The term ‘blended learning’ is relatively new in literature with very few references to the term predating 2000 although its use has been implied within educational technology literature (Bliuc, Goodyear, & Ellis, 2007). Masie (2006) asserts that “all learning is blended learning” (p. 22). However, the concept of blended learning is generally defined from either the conventional classroom face-to-face (f2f) perspective; “the combination of traditional face-to-face teaching methods with authentic online learning activities” (Davis & Fill, 2007, p. 817) or from the technology perspective; “the combination of e-learning and face-to-face (f2f) learning activity” (Ellis, Goodyear, Prosser, & O’Hara, 2006, p. 244). A third, middle-ground approach, used in literature is to define the concept by focusing on learning and pedagogy rather than from one particular modality perspective; “learning that is facilitated by the effective combination of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning, and founded on transparent communication amongst all parties involved with a course” (Heinze & Procter, 2004, p. 10). This is the definition adopted in this study.

As can be seen from various definitions provided, blended learning means different things to different people (Driscoll, 2002). This may be the reason why Little (2006) describes the amount of jargon associated with the term as a common critique of the concept of blended learning. He also adds that there exists “a ‘post hoc rationalization’ by those selling blended learning materials” (p. 191).

Time-space (when and how the interaction between teacher and learner or learner and learner occurs) is an important characteristic of blended learning. For example, Garrison and Kanuka (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004) define blended learning

as “the thoughtful integration of face to face and online learning, not a layering of one on top of another” (p. 96). One of the most salient features of online or e-learning according to Vrasidas and McIsaac (2000) is that it allows learning to be place and time independent. Online learning denotes “material that is accessible via a computer using networks or telecommunications rather than material accessed on paper or other non-networked medium” (Radford, 1997, p. #). Online learning is delivered by asynchronous and synchronous communication technologies.

*Asynchronous* communication does not take place simultaneously, it “takes place over time rather than at the same time” (Allan, 2007). An example of asynchronous communication is email. *Asynchronous e-learning* may be of two forms: facilitated or self-paced learning (Hofmann, 2008). *Synchronous* learning requires real-time interaction between learners and an instructor (Hofmann, 2008). An example of a tool used for asynchronous e-learning is video conferencing.

To introduce blended learning into the context of time-space, Bonk (2006) gives an example of how blended learning occurs when students debate and discuss scholarly ideas in an asynchronous forum and then bring in the authors for a synchronous chat or video conference or whereby blended learning can simply supplement course readings with online articles and simulations. However, Oliver and Trigwell (2005) argue that learning, from the perspective of the learner, is rarely, if ever, the subject of blended learning. They indicate the form of instruction, teaching, and pedagogies are being addressed instead.

### 3.3.1 *The Antecedents of Blended Learning*

Prior to the industrial revolution, elite higher education was the domain of males from higher levels of society who came together in one place at one time to learn from a master (McIssacs & Gunawardena, 1996). When correspondence

education was introduced in the late 1880s to provide educational opportunities in the industrial era for non-elites, where the learner and the master were no longer occupying the same time and space model of learning, there was recognition that learning could occur autonomously (McIssacs & Gunawardena, 1996).

The antecedence of blended learning can be traced through *distance*, *open*, *flexible* and *distributed* learning. Distance education is “a method of education where students can study in their own time, at the place of their choice (home, work or learning centre) and without face-to-face contact with a teacher” (Bates, 2005, p. 5). Distance education is often linked with concepts of ‘open learning’ (Peters, 2003). It has always been substantially about teaching with media that enable teachers and students to be remote from each other in time and space (T. Evans, 2003). Open learning...

...involves policies and practices that permit entry to learning with no or minimum barriers with respect to age, gender, or time constraints and with recognition of prior learning. These policies need not be part of a distance education system but are complementary to it (G. Farrell, 2003, p. 9).

Flexible learning is “the provision of learning opportunities that can be accessed at any place and time. Flexible learning relates more to the scheduling of activities than to any particular delivery mode” (G. Farrell, 2003, p. 9). The terms ‘flexible learning’ and ‘flexible delivery’ are actually quite flexible in their meaning too (T. D. Evans & Smith, 1999). Peters (2003) indicates that flexibility involves a focus on increased accessibility – universities should be flexible enough to attract and enrol more and new groups of students – and individual learners should be allowed to learn when they want, what they want and how they want. Universities should be encouraged , according to Lynch (1997) to reconcile the idea of flexible

learning with conventional values as the process will “stimulate examination of assumptions, policies and practices that will make it possible to reinvent a more useful, competitive and vibrant university” (p. 146). Distributed learning consists of learning situations in which the students and instructor are located in different physical localities. It is broader than distance education as it can be used to refer to both education and training (Turoff, Howard, & Discenza, 2008). Also known as computer-mediated instruction, it encompasses technologies such as video or audio conferencing, satellite broadcasting, and web-based multimedia formats (Cornell University, n.d.). Distributed learning allows instructors, students, and course content to be not only located in different, non-centralized locations but also reduces the learning distance between faculty and students in their face-to-face interactions (University of Regina, 2009). The principle goal of distributed learning is to customize learning environments to better fit different learning styles (Cornell University, n.d.). According to Daniel (2008), user-centered design (UCD) principles in distributed learning are critical to the emergence distributed communities of practice (DCoPs). DCoPs are a form of online learning community (OLC) which is “attracting attention for their potential to enhance learning, facilitate information exchange, and to stimulate knowledge creation across cultural, geographical, and organisational boundaries” (B. K. Daniel, et al., 2008, p. 1187). A unique feature of DCoPs is “the absence of a teacher or instructor; rather, the learners are also the teachers, as members collectively determine the content and support each other throughout the learning process (B. K. Daniel, et al., 2008, p. 1189).

Although distance and open education can mean different things, the one characteristic they share is “an attempt to provide alternative means of high quality

education or training for those who either cannot take conventional, campus-based programmes or who choose not to” (Bates, 2005, p. 6). An example of this scenario is presented in the following passage:...

...Once World War II was declared in September 1939 the national education minister lobbied the French president to create a structure so that education could continue. In December 1939 the National Centre for Distance Education (CNED) was established by decree as a temporary measure during the hostilities. This temporary arrangement turned out to be permanent – CNED today is an institution with 350,000 students (Schweber, 2008, p. 2).

This vision of bringing education to anyone, anywhere, at anytime, has been very attractive especially to adults who cannot attend university for family, work or location reasons (Schweber, 2008).

With advances in technology expanding the choice of educational possibilities and contributing to an increased interest in distance education, a growing number of courses are being supplemented or completely delivered through distance education (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2003). According to Rosenberg (2001), the most notable aspect of e-learning is its “growing diversity, beyond courseware and instruction, to generating and disseminating information and directly supporting performance” (p. 11). This has resulted in a trend toward the merging of Internet-based and conventional education (Ayala, 2009) into *blended learning*. Robertson (2007) considers access to technology in order to fulfill the promoted benefits of blended learning to be an important issue. However, not all learners, in all contexts, have access to the Internet, let alone learning technologies and Robertson (2007) notes that “by offering a blended learning approach we are advantaging the already advantaged and conversely disadvantaging the disadvantaged” ( p. 117). A general caveat should be

taken from Tiene (2004) who notes that “one critical mistake is to be overly ambitious and overly optimistic about what technology can accomplish” (p. 90).

Yoon and Lim (2007) note that in regards to blended learning few theories and models exist to explain exactly what blending is, that determining an ideal mix of various delivery media is difficult to generalise, and that rarely are practitioners guided in the literature in the practice of blending. Furthermore, in a study on perceptions held about blended learning at the State University of New York Institute of Technology (Welker & Berardino, 2005), faculty reported more work on their part and some loss of conventional classroom dynamics and students reported confusion, reduced social interaction, and more work as disadvantages of blended learning. Therefore it is prudent to explore in further detail the process of blended learning instruction, teaching, and pedagogy.

### 3.3.2 *The Process of Blending: Where, How and Why?*

Blended learning can occur at one of four levels: *activity level*, *course level*, *program level* or *institution level*. Blending at *activity level* occurs when a learning activity contains both face-to-face and computer-mediated elements. Blending at *course level* occurs when a course contains both face-to-face and computer-mediated elements. Blending at *program level* occurs when participants in learning choose a mix between face-to-face courses and online courses or when a combination between the two is prescribed by the learning program. This level of blending is also commonly used in corporate training. Blending at *institutional level* occurs when organisations make a commitment to blending face-to-face and computer-mediated instruction (Graham, 2006).

At any level there are five key ingredients to the blended learning process (Carman, 2002). These ingredients are 1) live events; 2) self-paced learning; 3)

collaboration; 4) assessment; and 5) performance support materials. Live events are synchronous instructor-led training sessions such as virtual classrooms. Self-paced learning involves activities such Internet or CD-ROM-based training which the learner completes individually, at a time and place suitable to the learner. Collaboration refers to environments in which a learner communicates with other learners such as using email or online discussion boards. Assessment can take the form of pre or post assessment. Pre-assessment is used to determine prior knowledge of learners. Post-assessment is useful for measuring knowledge transfer. Performance support materials include printable materials, reference material and downloads which enhance learning retention and knowledge transfer (Carman, 2002).

The issues which have created roadblocks for blended learning initiatives include: issues to do with design, facilitation and support of blended learning experiences (J. Hofmann, 2006). Design issues include creating programs without using a formal design process, redesign seen as easier than creating new programs and using multiple stand-alone components rather than weaving learning experiences together. Facilitation issues include the over emphasis on live components and undervaluing self-directed components of blended learning and a lack of formal training for the blended learning implementation team (J. Hofmann, 2006). This is understandable according to Brown and Voltz (2005) as the design of e-learning resources requires understandings in education, multimedia content, resource publication, and electronic technologies. Support issues include a lack of organisational understanding and inexperienced learners who have not been taught how to learn online (J. Hofmann, 2006). Due to such a variety of instructional, presentation, and distribution methods available, Saunders & Werner (Saunders & Werner, 2002) indicate determining the *correct* blend can be an enormous task.

Osguthorpe and Graham (2003) identified six reasons for blending: 1) pedagogical richness; 2) access to knowledge; 3) social interaction; 4) personal agency; 5) cost-effectiveness; and 6) ease of revision. Graham (2006) notes that the most common reason presented in literature for blending is that the blended learning model provides the best of both worlds. However, he also acknowledges that “a blended learning environment can mix the least effective elements of both worlds if it is not designed well” (p. 8). This dichotomy of outcomes from blended learning is evident when the blending of learning methods and approaches can “produce the richness and achieve the desired learning outcomes” (Saunders & Werner, 2002, p. 4) or conversely, where poorly designed blended learning experience can potentially decrease effective learning compared with a single delivery method (Collopy & Arnold, 2009). Other benefits of blended learning include extending the reach of learning (from a fixed classroom to a virtual classroom) and optimizing development costs and time (Singh, 2003), its ability to facilitate a community of enquiry , supplement or complement existing courseware (Driscoll, 2002), reinforcing classroom learning, reducing classroom time and cost, and accommodating different learning needs and values (Dufresne & Bethke, 2005).

The flexibility offered by blended learning through multiple modes of delivery make this method of learning a context-appropriate model of education delivery in exceptional circumstances such as examples of learning during the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic and for individuals living in precarious situations as those presently in Iraq, Afghanistan or the Sudan (C. J. Bonk, et al., 2006). The link between the right to education and the concept of online learning has also been identified (Arulchelvan & Viswanathan, 2008; Ivins, 2008; L. Lin, 2008; Schweber, 2008; Siaciwena & Lubinda, 2008) and developments in technology have

expanded the possibilities for accessing the right to education due to the use of the Internet for online distance education (Schweber, 2008).

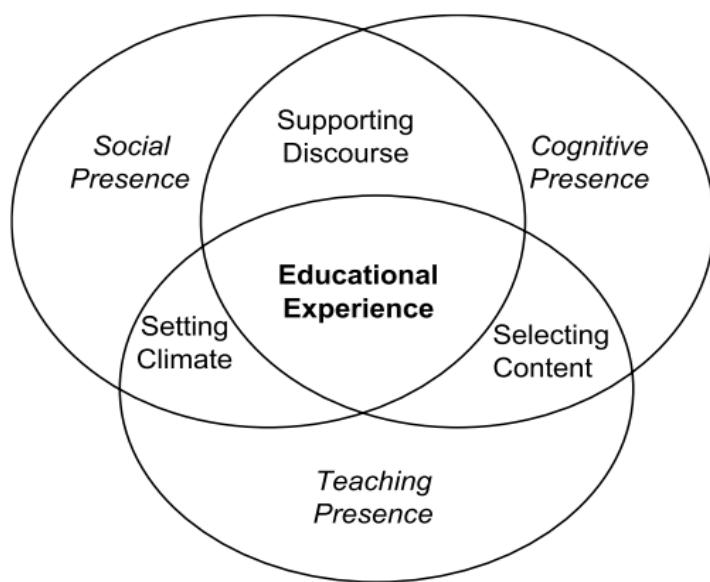
Jagannathan (2006) notes that bridging the knowledge divide, social, linguistic, and cultural contexts are often extremely important to factor into the learning strategy when delivered at a distance. Richardson (2011) found that “the language of technology, referring to both English and technical language, was often not compatible with end users’ past experiences, ability levels, or existing resources” (p. 20). Key challenges in making blended learning work in a developing country context (the context closest to this refugee higher education study) include difficulties in accessing technology, e-learning design costs, creating mechanisms for sharing and scaling up, reducing learner dropout and improving measurement of impacts (Jagannathan, 2006).

### *3.3.3 Blended Learning and Communities of Inquiry*

A rationale for using blended learning is the engagement of students in meaningful learning through a rich mixture of learning opportunities (Allan, 2007). Garrison and Vaughan (2007) describe the concept of student engagement in the context of blended learning versus conventional face-to-face classroom teaching as follows...

...It is virtually impossible to engage students in purposeful and meaningful inquiry without the Internet and communication technologies to precipitate and sustain discourse that is central to higher order learning. Well-designed blended learning can be a much more engaged and meaningful learning experience than sitting passively in a lecture hall (Garrison & Vaughan, 2007, p. 1).

Another concept which makes blended learning particularly effective is its ability to facilitate a community of inquiry (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004) based on “reflection and discourse which is created through social, cognitive and teaching presences” (Garrison & Vaughn, 2008, p. 18). Such communities “provide the condition for free and open dialogue, critical debate, negotiation and agreement – the hallmark of higher education” (p. 97). Regardless of the mode (online or face-to-face), Garrison and Kanuka (2004) indicate communities of enquiry consist of three elements; cognitive, social and teaching presence. These three elements are shown in Figure 6.



**Figure 6: Communities of Inquiry.**

(Source: (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004)).

Teaching presence is defined as “the design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes” (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, & Archer, 2001, p. 5). Cognitive presence is defined as “the extent to which the participants in any particular configuration of a community of inquiry are able to

construct meaning through sustained communication” (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2001, p.11).

Stacey & Gerbic (2008) describe the association between blended learning and communities of practice (CoP) where “the blend of technologies with face-to-face interaction is a means by which a CoP is established” (Stacey & Gerbic, 2008, p. 965). Studies of this association though tend to focus on the deliverers (teachers and course designers) as the CoP (Stacey, Smith, & Barty, 2004) or tend to focus on the online portion of the blend (Balcaen & Hirtz, 2007; Stacey, Barty, & Smith, 2005). More deeply, there have been studies into the relationship between a sense of community and students’ satisfaction and learning (Rovai, 2002; Stepich & Ertmer, 2003). Dawson (2008) believes as the formation of cohesive social network is integral for effective learning, the “examination of formation and structure of these social networks and sense of community experienced...provides new approaches to informing practitioners of the effectiveness of implemented practices” (p. 226).

### ***3.4 Conclusion***

This chapter has reviewed literature on three theories; social capital, communities of practice and blended learning. Key concepts have been defined, examples provided and critiques identified. The link between social capital and education has been established and the dynamics of trust, reciprocity and norms in relationships explained. The formation and development of communities of practice have been discussed by focusing on the core elements of joint enterprise, mutual engagement and shared repertoires. For blended learning, the flexibility of approaches and applications were identified which make this model of learning an appropriate model for deployment for refugee higher education in a location of

protracted forced migration crisis. The focus of the thesis now turns to the research methodology of this study.

## CHAPTER 4 - METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology used in this study. The chapter includes rationale for adopting a qualitative approach, description of the chosen case study research strategy (Robson, 1993) and details of how data was collected from four distinct participant groups; (1) members of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC), (2) Refugees from the ACU TBB programs (predominantly the Diploma in Liberal Studies program), (3) ACU TBB academics and (4) Policy-makers and Practitioners. Surveys (semi-structured interviews and online questionnaires) and field observation methods with purposive sampling techniques were used to attempt to elicit the views of all stakeholders (G. Hughes, 2007). These methods will be described in the context of how they assisted the researcher in achieving the aims and objectives and answering the research questions posed in the study. The chapter concludes with discussion on data analysis, reliability and validity. The outcome of the chapter is a structured outline of how research was conducted into the topic of attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.

### ***4.1 Qualitative Research Approach***

This study is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research is based on “distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem” (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). The tenet of qualitative research is that “reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds” (Merriam, 1998, p. 6) and a “commitment to collect extensive data” (Creswell, 1998, pp. 16-17). Qualitative research is characterised by the researcher attempting to capture data on the perceptions of the actors being studied, gaining a holistic overview of the context of

the study, multiple interpretations of data and most analysis occurring with words (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Advantages of qualitative data include the ability to preserve chronological flow, illustrate which events led to which consequences and provision of rich explanations (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Qualitative research is a diverse term covering an array of strategies or methods<sup>28</sup> described by Strauss (1998) as a “set of procedures and techniques for gathering and analyzing data” (p. 3). For example, Tesch’s (1990) taxonomy of qualitative research strategies lists 27 different strategies while Wolcott’s (1992) taxonomy lists nearly two dozen different strategies. Common qualitative research strategies according to Creswell (1998), include biography, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory and case study strategies. These strategies have in common the aim to seek to describe, decode and translate and somehow come to terms with the meaning rather than the measurement or frequency of the phenomena. This study utilised a case study strategy.

## ***4.2 Case Studies***

A case study “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin, 2003, p. 1) and is ideal to use when a holistic multi-perspective analysis is required (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). Yin (2003) indicates case studies are the preferred research strategy when ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are being posed. According to Yin (2003) the case study’s unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence. Case studies are also suggested by Grootaert and Van Bastelaer (2002) as the best approach to qualitatively measure social capital, a key concept in this study. A case study research strategy was therefore appropriate for this

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<sup>28</sup> The terms ‘research strategy’ and ‘research methods’ are used interchangeably in this chapter.

study as the topic of attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB is a contemporary phenomenon investigated in a unique and real-life context and where the researcher seeks to explore the phenomena by asking questions such as “*Why is the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises so scant?*” and “*How have the ACU TBB programs been achieved?*”.

Case studies may be *exploratory*, *explanatory* or *descriptive* and each may investigate *single* or *multiple* cases with multiple levels of analysis (Yin, 2003). This research project uses a case study design which is *exploratory* in purpose. Some beneficial aspects of exploratory studies include allowing the researcher to become familiar with basic facts, to create a general mental picture of conditions, formulate and focus questions for future research and develop techniques for measuring and locating future data (Neuman, 2006). Exploratory case studies are “undertaken when little is known about the situation at hand or when no information is available on how similar problems or research issues have been resolved in the past” (Cavana, et al., 2001, p. 108). In these types of case studies the researcher is interested in the situational factors so as to understand the characteristics of the phenomena of interest (Cavana, et al., 2001).

Case selection should be an integral part of any case study. Primary criteria for case selection according to George (2005) should be relevance to the research objective/s of the study, and whether it includes theory development, theory testing, or heuristic purposes. Heuristics, from the Greek root ‘*to find*’ or ‘*discover*’ is “reasoning not regarded as final and strict but as provisional and plausible only, whose purpose is to discover the solution of the present problem” (Polya, 1945, p. 115). Heuristics are considered as ‘rules of thumb’ when little empirical support exists and considered

‘grounded rules’ when a greater level of empirical support exists (Hunt, 2002). A research objective of this study was to discover how a grassroots refugee higher education advocacy group (the RTEC) and personnel from a university institution in Australia (ACU) have enabled higher education attainment for refugees on the TBB; something which the UNHCR, UNESCO and iNGOs have been unable or unwilling to do. Therefore, case selection in this study was based on a *heuristic* purpose relevant to the stated research objectives.

#### *4.2.1 Embedded, Multiple Case Design*

In this study the RTEC, the ACU TBB Academics and ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort were explored as individual cases. Within each individual case theoretical lenses of social capital, communities of practice and blended learning were utilised where appropriate to descriptively analyse the contribution each concept made towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB. For example, the RTEC case study utilised social capital and communities of practice whereas the ACU TBB Academics and ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort cases utilised social capital, communities of practice *and* blended learning. The results of a multiple embedded case study are generally more compelling than that of a single or multiple case study design (Michael, 2003) and are particularly relevant due to this study’s complexity. The embedded, multiple case design for this study is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1 Embedded case design.**

CASE 1	<b>THE REFUGEE TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (RTEC)</b>
CASE 1.1	<p><b>Genesis and Evolution of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC)</b></p> <p><u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of the RTEC.</p> <p><u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how the RTEC as a catalyst for advocating accredited higher education for refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises has contributed towards the attainment of higher education for refugees on the TBB.</p>
CASE 1.2	<p><b>Social Capital of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC)</b></p> <p><u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of social capital within the committee and between the committee and collaborators.</p> <p><u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how social capital within the RTEC and between the committee and collaborators has contributed towards the attainment of higher education for refugees on the TBB.</p>
CASE 1.3	<p><b>The Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC) as a Community of Practice (CoP)</b></p> <p><u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of the RTEC as a community of practice advocating accredited higher education for refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises.</p> <p><u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how the RTEC community of practice has contributed towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.</p>
CASE 2	<b>THE ACU TBB ACADEMICS</b>
CASE 2.1	<p><b>Social Capital of the ACU TBB Academics</b></p> <p><u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of social capital amongst academics involved in the ACU TBB programs.</p> <p><u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how social capital amongst the ACU TBB academics has contributed towards the attainment of university education for refugees on the TBB.</p>
CASE 2.2	<p><b>The ACU academics as a Community of Practice (CoP)</b></p> <p><u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of the ACU TBB academics as a community of practice of teachers.</p> <p><u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how the ACU TBB academic community of practice has contributed towards the attainment of higher education for refugees on the TBB.</p>
CASE 2.3	<p><b>Blended Learning and the ACU TBB academics</b></p> <p><u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of the use of blended learning by academics involved in the ACU TBB programs.</p> <p><u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how the use of blended learning by academics in the ACU TBB programs has contributed towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.</p>
CASE 3	<b>THE ACU DIPLOMA IN LIBERAL STUDIES REFUGEE STUDENT COHORT</b>
CASE 3.1	<p><b>Social Capital of the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort</b></p> <p><u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of social capital within the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort.</p> <p><u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how social capital within the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort has contributed towards the attainment of higher education for refugees on the TBB.</p>

<b>CASE 3.2</b>	<p><b>The ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort as a Community of Practice (CoP)</b></p> <p><u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort as a community of practice of learners.</p> <p><u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort community of practice has contributed towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.</p>
<b>CASE 3.3</b>	<p><b>Blended Learning and the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort</b></p> <p><u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of the use of blended learning by refugee students in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program.</p> <p><u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how the use of blended learning by refugee students in the ACU TBB programs has contributed towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.</p>

#### 4.2.1.1 Unit of analysis.

A distinct definition of the unit of analysis (“the level of aggregation of the data collected during data analysis” (Cavana, et al., 2001, p. 464)) was necessary for each case to firmly bind the subsequent study, develop relevant and precise propositions, and guide data collection (Crosthwaite, MacLeod, & Malcolm, 1997). The unit of analysis was *individual* and *organisation* for the RTEC and individual and group for both the ACU TBB academics and the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort.

### 4.3 Data Collection

There are multiple sources of evidence available to a researcher planning on conducting a case study. For example, Stake (1995), and Yin (2003) identified at least six potential sources of evidence for case studies: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation and physical artifacts. Tellis (1997) notes that the investigator should be capable of dealing with all potential sources, should it be necessary, but each case will present different opportunities for data collection. Of the six potential sources of evidence, interviews (including online questionnaire) and direct observation were used to meet the specific requirements of

each case in this study. Furthermore, because qualitative researchers are the primary instruments for data collection and analysis, “interpretations of reality are accessed directly through observations and interviews” (Merriman, 2002, p. 25). It should be noted also that documentation and archival records were used primarily for conducting the review of literature.

The multiple method approach to this study also allowed for the addressing of different but complementary questions within the study. Robson (1993) calls this type of approach the “complementary purposes model” (p. 290) where different methods are used for alternative tasks. The complementary purposes model was utilised in this study by using interviews and online questionnaires to gather data on social capital and communities of practice relating to the RTEC, ACU TBB academics and ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort and the use of interviews, online questionnaires *and* observations to gather data on blended learning.

#### *4.3.1 Participant Recruitment and Sampling Techniques*

##### *4.3.1.1. Participant recruitment.*

Interview and online questionnaire participants were recruited primarily by the researcher and with the assistance of Fr. Michael Smith, the convenor of the RTEC, Mr Duncan MacLaren, Coordinator of the ACU Refugee Programs on the TBB and Dr. Marie Joyce, a member of the RTEC and teacher/ tutor in the Diploma in Liberal Studies program on the TBB. Additionally, potential participants from education practitioners from iNGOs and policy-makers from UN bodies such as the UNHCR and UNESCO with expertise in refugee education on the TBB were approached by the researcher through email and asked if they were willing to complete an online questionnaire so that the researcher could gather data on the over-arching theme of the provision (or lack) of higher education for refugees on the TBB and in worldwide

locations of protracted forced migration crises. This Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group was made up of 8 members with first-hand experience in refugee education and relief activities on the TBB. For the circumstances associated with this study (location and/ or mobility of potential participants), the combination of interviews and online questionnaires also enabled a greater participant rate than would have been the case if a single mode of data gathering had been used. Finally, observation participants were recruited by the researcher during the fieldwork phase of the study.

Purposive sampling techniques (Judgement and Snowball Sampling) were used to gather data from four distinct participant groups; (1) refugee students, (2) RTEC members, (3) ACU academics and (4) Policy-makers and Practitioners. Judgement sampling was used to gather data from the RTEC members, refugee students and ACU academics participant groups and snowball sampling was used to gather data from the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group.

#### *4.3.1.2. Judgement sampling.*

Judgement sampling is a “non-probability sampling design in which the sample subject is chosen on the basis of the individual’s ability to provide the type of special information needed by the researcher” (Cavana, et al., 2001, p. 458). A drawback of this type of sampling which the researcher must be aware of is that it may limit the generalisability of the findings due to using a sample of experts conveniently available to the researcher (Cavana, et al., 2001). However, the benefit of such a sample is that it can “provide enlightened opinions, views and knowledge which constitute a rich data set” (Cavana, et al., 2001, p. 263).

#### *4.3.1.3. Snowball sampling.*

Snowball sampling is a “non-probability sampling method in which the respondents are selected based on information provided by the initial respondents” (Cavana, et al., 2001, p. 462). There are two possible limitations which the researcher must be aware of when using snowball sampling. Cavana (2001) notes that bias may occur as subjects may refer the researcher on to additional subjects who hold similar views to themselves and generalisability of findings may be limited by the representativeness of the initial sample.

The selection of judgement and snowball sampling techniques are justified in this study as judgement sampling was “the only viable sampling methods for obtaining the type of information that is required from very specific pockets of people who alone possess the needed facts and can give the information sought” (Cavana, et al., 2001, p. 263) and snowball sampling allowed for “gaining access to information from people who are very hard to locate under normal circumstances” (Cavana, et al., 2001, p. 264).

#### *4.3.2 Interviews*

Interviews are an appropriate data collection method for this study as they lend themselves to use in combination with other methods, in a multiple method approach (Robson, 1993). Singleton and Straits (1999) indicate that interviews and questionnaires are components of surveys whereby survey research “involves the administration of interviews or questionnaires to relatively large groups of people” (p. 8). Interviews can take into account many characteristics of the respondents which may not have been relevant to the construction of standardised scales (Keats, 2000) and Walshaw (1995) believes it can be argued that for interpretive case studies as an outside-observer, interviews are the primary data source of evidence in case studies.

Donaghy (1984) and Stewart and Cash (1978) describe the following categories of purposes of interviews: (a) information providing, (b) information collecting, (c) selection, (d) performance evaluation, (e) complaint receiving, (f) decision making, and (g) persuasion. The purpose of interview for this study was information collecting.

There are also generalisability issues to be acknowledged when conducting interviews in qualitative research. According to Maxwell (2002) an interview is a social situation and inherently involves a relationship between the interviewer and informant. Therefore an understanding of the nature of the relationship, how it affects what goes on in the interview, and how the informant's actions and views could differ in other situations is crucial to the validity of accounts based on interviews (Briggs, 1986; Mishler, 1986). The issues of rapport, validity and generalizability are discussed further in the following sections of this chapter.

#### *4.3.2.1. Interview schedules.*

The interview schedule for the ACU TBB refugee students is provided in Appendix C, the interview schedule for members of the RTEC is provided in Appendix D and the interview schedule for ACU academics is available in Appendix E. The interview schedules covered seven core sections: Demographics, Higher learning for refugees, Higher learning on the Thai-Burma Border, Blended Learning, Social Capital, Communities of Practice and Conclusion. There were subtle differences between the interview schedules of the three interview participant groups to allow for focused exploration of topics relevant to each participant group.

#### *4.3.2.2. Building rapport.*

As an outside-observer, one of the first tasks of the interviewer is to develop good rapport with the respondent/s. Keats (2000) describes rapport as...

...that comfortable, cooperative relationship between two people in which there are maintained both feelings of satisfaction and an empathetic understanding of each other's position (p. 23).

Fontes (2008) notes that even if the interviewer is an expert at building rapport, assumptions of interviewers exist such as feeling they have “a right to information because they have the interviewee’s best interests at heart” (p. 167) or “because speaking openly with us just seems like the right thing to do” (p. 167). Interviewees may not agree with these assumptions. The interviewer should, according to Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009), also “strive to create a communication environment conducive to disclosure” (p. 227). Therefore it is absolutely imperative according to Fontes (2008) that interviewers understand the reasons why people hesitate to speak to interviewers and that...

A wide variety of beliefs restrain interviewees from speaking with us and for minority cultures and others, the act of sharing personal matters with people from outside the family and culture may be seen as leading to unwanted and threatening attention from outsiders (p. 169).

It must also be remembered that the refugee participant group in this study is characterised as being in their current circumstances due to... “A well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” (UNHCR, 2008g, p. 2). This fear directly relates to trust and there is a dichotomy of intrinsic issues in regards to refugees and trust which any interviewer needs to be aware of. On the one hand refugees place their trust in organisations and individuals such as the UNHCR, NGOs and humanitarian relief personnel to protect and sustain them in a safe-haven. On the other hand the refugees have had trust in governments, military and sometimes communities and individuals

eroded by a series of actions described previously in the UNHCR's definition of a refugee. In many cases refugees are mindful and fearful of the implications that a 'slip of the tongue' in an interview with an outsider may have on the refugee's own personal safety and the personal safety of family members and friends still living in the countries from which the refugee has fled seeking asylum. It was imperative therefore in this study that rapport be established and this was achieved partly through the development of trust networks between the refugee students and ACU and in the case of the researcher, between the RTEC (of which the researcher was also a member), the ACU and the refugee students.

#### *4.3.2.3. Interview participant summary.*

The total population of interviewees in the study was N = 10. The Convenor of the RTEC was the only Australian-based interviewee ( $n=1$ ). TBB-based interviewees included the on-ground tutor of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program plus 8 ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies students ( $n = 9$ ). The Australian-based participant was interviewed using Skype and TBB-based participants were interviewed face-to-face at the ACU TBB study centre in over a 5 day period in April 2010. Interviews took approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour to complete. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Completed draft transcriptions were provided to each participant for final vetting before being regarded as true and accurate reflections of the interviews. A summary of interview participants is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Interview participants.**

<b>Interviews</b>	RTEC Members	$n = 1$	Convenor of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC).
	Refugee students	$n = 8$	ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies student cohort
	ACU Academics	$n = 1$	ACU on-ground tutor for Diploma in Liberal Studies.

#### 4.3.3 *Online questionnaires*

Questionnaires are defined by Cavana (2001) as “preformulated written set of questions to which the respondent records the answers, usually within rather closely delineated alternatives” (p. 460). Online questionnaires offer advantages of potential ease of administration, ability to reach wide geographic locations, generally inexpensive and allow for the respondent to answer at their convenience (Cavana, et al., 2001). Disadvantages of online questionnaires include a degree of computer literacy and access to the Internet required by the participant, and a willingness by the participant to complete the survey (Cavana, et al., 2001).<sup>29</sup>

Online questionnaires were used to expeditiously gather data from participants in the refugee student, RTEC and ACU academic participant groups who were not interviewed face-to-face, and from another participant category; Policy-makers and Practitioners. As previously mentioned, this additional participant category was intended to elicit responses from a wide range of members/ employees from UN bodies and NGOs and iNGOs with expertise and/ or experience in refugee education on the TBB and who could identify or offer insights into the perceived barriers to the delivery of higher education for refugees not only on the TBB but also into worldwide locations of forced migration crises. A major benefit of deploying an online questionnaire to this participant group was the alleviation of difficulty in providing paper-based questionnaires to addresses of field-based policy-makers and practitioners who may have been presently engaged in refugee care and transiting between refugee camps on the TBB and field or head offices.

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<sup>29</sup> Cavana (2001) uses the terms ‘survey’ and ‘questionnaire’ interchangeably.

#### *4.3.3.1. Online questionnaire schedules.*

The online questionnaire schedules are presented in Appendix A and closely mirrored the interview schedules.

#### *4.3.3.2. Online questionnaire participant summary.*

The total population of online questionnaire participants in the study was  $N = 18$  (The number of Australian-based participants was  $n = 11$ , TBB-based participants  $n = 3$  and ‘Other’ locations  $n = 4$ ). A summary of categories and numbers of online questionnaire participants is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Online Questionnaire Participants.**

<b>Online Questionnaires</b>	Refugee Students	$n = 2$	2 x students who studied the Diploma in Business program. 1 x student studying the Diploma in Liberal Studies program.
	RTEC Members	$n = 6$	Committee members.
	ACU Academics	$n = 2$	Personnel from ACU Academics involved in delivering the TBB programs.
	Policy-makers and Practitioners	$n = 8$	Employees of UN bodies, NGOs and iNGOs with expertise and/ or experience in refugee education on the TBB.
<b>Total Online questionnaire Participants</b>		<b>N = 18</b>	

#### *4.3.4 Observations*

Observations were used in this study to record the activities and behaviours of the ACU refugee students participating in their natural learning environment of the ACU TBB study centre. Observation data collected was intended to have multiple functions of supporting and supplementing, complementing or to set in perspective data obtained by other means (Robson, 1993). For example, observations were used to support or complement data collected from surveys (interviews and online

questionnaires) by the ACU TBB refugee students and academics on the process of delivering and receiving/ participating in blended learning on the TBB.

Observations of the learning process on the TBB were conducted as a fieldwork component in the data collection phase of this study. Observations were unstructured, observing events as they happened and where a set of tentative research objectives served as a guide to who, when, where and how an individual was observed (Cavana, et al., 2001). Participation in the observations was voluntary and the role of the researcher was as a non-participant observer.

Yin (2003) indicates relevant behaviour or environmental conditions are also available for observation and these serve as yet another source of evidence in a case study. By observing the process of learning by refugees in the unique context of the ACU TBB study centre, comparisons were able to be made between the ACU refugee learners' experiences with the experiences of the researcher of participating in a more conventional, Australian university campus-based undergraduate program.

#### *4.3.4.1. Field notes.*

Observations were recorded as field notes. These notes were taken as an ongoing stream of consciousness commentary about what was happening in the research, involving both observation and analysis (Van Maanen, 1988). Field research notes included all details and specifics observed in the field and were written to "permit multiple interpretations later" (Neuman, 2006, p. 401). Walsham (1995) notes that the issue of how to report fieldwork is particularly important for case studies where in order to establish some credibility to the reader, the researcher should describe in some detail how they have arrived at their results. Walsham's (1995) framework to achieve this includes, as a minimum, reporting on...

...details of the research sites chosen, the reasons for this choice, the number of people who were interviewed, what hierarchical or professional positions they occupied, what other data sources were used, and over what period the research was conducted (p. 79).

#### *4.3.4.2. Observation schedules and participant summary.*

A total of 3 observations of refugee students participating in the Diploma in Liberal Studies program on the TBB were conducted. [The ACU Diploma in Business and Certificate in Theology courses had been completed]. The observation schedule for the refugee students is available in Appendix A. Each observation was conducted over a 3 hour timeframe. Observations captured variation in the way the refugee students participated in online and offline learning; through different blends and activities such as logging into subject resources (WebCT or equivalent), participating in group or individual course work or assessment items, structured teaching or self-paced learning, communicating peer-to-peer, with teachers/ tutors, submission of assessment items and receiving feedback from teachers/ tutors. A summary of categories and numbers of observation participants is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Observation Participants.**

<b>Observations</b>	Refugee Students	<i>n</i> = 3	Diploma in Liberal Studies program students.
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#### *4.3.5 Data collection summary*

The anticipated number of participants in this study was never expected to be more than 40. Therefore the decision to adopt a qualitative case study research strategy was made with the full understanding that the sample size in any case study research project is never going to be large enough to qualify for the use of statistical inference (Easton, 2010). An overview of the forms of data collection used for each method in

this study, category of participant, number and description of participants is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Data Collection Summary.**

METHOD	PARTICIPANT GROUP	NUMBER	DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANT/S
<b>Interviews</b>	RTEC Members	<i>n</i> = 1	Convenor of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC).
	Refugee students	<i>n</i> = 8	ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies student cohort
	ACU Academics	<i>n</i> = 1	ACU on-ground tutor for Diploma in Liberal Studies.
<b>Online Questionnaires</b>	Refugee Students	<i>n</i> = 2	1 x students who studied the Diploma in Business program. 1 x student studying the Diploma in Liberal Studies program.
	RTEC Members	<i>n</i> = 6	Committee members.
	ACU Academics/ Coordinators	<i>n</i> = 2	Personnel from ACU involved in delivering the TBB programs (teaching and/or tutoring).
	Policy-Makers and Practitioners	<i>n</i> = 8	Members of UN bodies, NGOs and iNGOs with expertise in refugee education on the TBB.
<b>Observations</b>	Refugee Students	<i>n</i> = 3	Diploma in Liberal Studies program students.
<b>Total Participants</b>		<b>N = 28*</b>	

\* NB: The three students who participated in observations were also members of the Interviews/Refugee Student Participant Group. The three observations have not been included in the total participant number to avoid duplication of participant numbers.

#### *4.3.6 Leedy's Data Gathering Principles*

Data collected using the methods outlined previously were guided by Leedy's (1993) four data gathering principles which ask the following questions of the researcher:

What data do you need?

This study required data on refugee protection mechanisms (such as the UN refugee convention), issues relating to planning and deploying education programs for

refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises, the experiences and insights (such as iterative lessons learned from previously delivered programs for improving subsequent program deliveries) from the ACU refugee students and academics involved in the ACU TBB programs and the experiences and insights of members of the RTEC.

#### Where are the data located?

The data described above are located in multiple conventional and online sources. Online information services, journal articles, interviews, online questionnaires and observations were the prime sources of gathering such information/ data. Examples of locations of conventional and online sources of data included the websites of UN organisations, NGOs and documented instances of refugee education programs in online magazine and journal articles. Specific journals, magazines and websites targeted in this study are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Data locations.**

Websites	Uniform Resource Locator
UNHCR - The Refugee Agency	<a href="http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home">http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home</a>
UNESCO/Higher Education	<a href="http://www.unesco.org/en/higher-education/">http://www.unesco.org/en/higher-education/</a>
UNESCO/The Right to Education	<a href="http://www.unesco.org/en/right-to-education/">http://www.unesco.org/en/right-to-education/</a>
RefWorld/The Leader in Refugee Decision Support	<a href="http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain">http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain</a>
Jesuit Refugee Service	<a href="http://www.jrs.net/">http://www.jrs.net/</a>
Refugee Studies Centre – University of Oxford	<a href="http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/">http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/</a>
OCHA	<a href="http://ochaonline.un.org/">http://ochaonline.un.org/</a>
Journals	
Forced Migration Online	<a href="http://www.forcedmigration.org/">http://www.forcedmigration.org/</a>
Forced Migration Review	<a href="http://www.fmreview.org/">http://www.fmreview.org/</a>

Australian EJournal of Theology	<a href="http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/ejournal/aejt_10/veling.htm">http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/ejournal/aejt_10/veling.htm</a>
<b>Online Databases</b>	
JSTOR	
Web of Science	
ScienceDirect	
Proquest 5000	
Psychinfo	
ERIC: Educational Resources Information Center	

How do you intend to get the data?

A two-step process was employed. Firstly, data was accessed through library collections as part of an extensive online data gathering exercise. Secondly, as described in Sections 4.3.1 – 4.3.5 of this Chapter, data was collected from refugees on the TBB, RTEC members, ACU academics and Policy-makers and Practitioners working in the field of refugee education.

Precisely and in detail, what do you intend to do with the data?

The data was analysed to determine the extent of higher education programs for refugees on the TBB and in worldwide locations of protracted forced migration crises. The data was also analysed to attempt to understand the role and contribution of aspects of social capital, communities of practice and blended learning towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB. The findings from data analysis of refugee education on the TBB and in worldwide locations of protracted forced migration crises are presented in Chapter Five – In Situ University Education for Refugees on the Thai-Burma Border: Barriers, Constraints and Solutions. Findings from data analysis of the role and contribution of aspects of social capital, communities of practice and blended learning towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB are presented in Chapter 6 – The Refugee Tertiary Education

Committee (RTEC), Chapter 7 – The Australian Catholic University Thai-Burma Border Academics and Chapter 8 – The Australian Catholic University Thai-Burma Border Refugee Students.

#### *4.3.7 Ethics Implications*

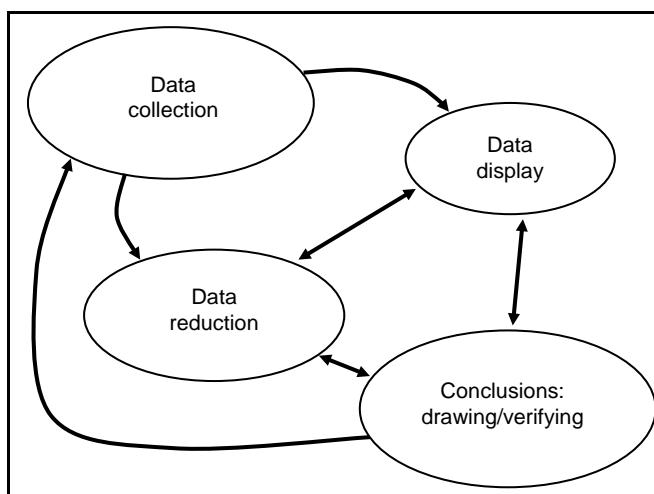
Several ethics implications were identified for this study in regards to the process of data gathering and subsequent reporting of findings. These implications included the anonymity of refugee students, non-disclosure of precise location of the ACU TBB refugee study centre and the relationship between the researcher and ACU.

- *Anonymity of refugee students* - No ACU TBB refugees are identified in this study for safety and security reasons as some refugees have fled their home countries from persecution and several refugee students have family members still residing in Burma. Any identification of refugees participating in the ACU TBB programs could have implications to the safety and security for the refugee student and/ or the refugee student's family.
- *Non-Disclosure of refugee learning location* - The location of delivery of the ACU TBB program/s where interviews and observations were conducted for this study is not divulged in this thesis for similar safety and security reasons identified in the previous limitation. This follows a protocol established in previous publications by ACU of the TBB programs of non-disclosure of the precise location of the ACU refugee study centre/s on the TBB.
- *Relationship between researcher and ACU* - The researcher is neither a student nor employee of ACU. This circumstance limited any contemporaneous understanding of what was happening with the

ACU TBB refugee students and with the TBB programs. The researcher was ‘one step removed’ from the workings of the ACU programs and the researcher relied on information provided by ACU and the Coordinator of the TBB programs, particularly through the data collection phase of the study.

#### **4.4 Data Analysis**

High-level analysis of data collected in this study followed Miles and Huberman’s (1994) framework of “three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification”(Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10) . This framework is presented in Figure 7.



**Figure 7: Components of Data Analysis - Interactive Model.**

(Source: (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 12).

It should also be noted that data display and reduction are not separate from analysis; they are part of the analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

#### 4.4.1 Data Reduction

Data reduction is described as “the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10) or ‘data condensation’ (Tesch, 1990). The process of deciding upon the research questions and data collection methods for example are part of what Miles and Huberman (1994) describe as anticipatory data reduction. Data reduction also does not stop at data collection – it continues after the fieldwork until a final report has been completed.

##### 4.4.1.1 Analysing ‘within-case’ data.

Analyzing data is “the heart of building theory from case studies” (Eisenhardt, 2003, p. 17) and assists to overcome the issue whereby “one cannot ordinarily follow how a researcher got from 3600 pages of field notes to the final conclusion, sprinkled with vivid quotes though they may be” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 16). For this study, case studies were analysed by ordering interview, questionnaire and observation data into categories based on themes and by examining the relationships between themes. This pattern matching logic (Yin, 2003) is a desirable strategy where an empirically-based pattern is compared to a predicted pattern or with alternative predictions. If the patterns match then internal validity (see Section 4.5.1) is strengthened. As this research project uses an exploratory case study, patterns may be matched to the dependent variable, independent variable or both.

This study also used the methodological principles of open and axial coding described by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Codes are, at their simplest, just labels according to Morse and Richards (2002). Whereas open coding takes apart the data line by line, sentence by sentence or paragraph by paragraph, axial coding puts the data back together again in new ways by making connections between categories and its

subcategories. For example, when reading transcriptions of interviews each paragraph of text was examined to identify what the interviewee was focusing on. This is similar to the process described by Hays and Minichiello (2010) whereby they examined each line of text. In carrying out this process for this study of attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB, a list of themes emerged which, as Hays and Minichiello (2010) rightly point, tended to be interrelated.

The open and axial coding and pattern matching logic were personal preferences in method or style of data analysis for this researcher. Hays and Minichiello (2010) suggest that “regardless of your preferred style and what is most appropriate for your study, you will follow a systematic process that can be explained and defended to others” (p. 155).

For the embedded ACU TBB academics and ACU TBB refugee student cases, the use of individual and group units of analysis enabled a thorough analysis to occur and overcame one of the common pitfalls of embedded design analysis identified by Yin (2003) where the case focuses only “on the sub-unit level and fails to return to the larger unit of analysis” (p. 50). The multidimensional aspect to this study whereby concepts of social capital, communities of practice and blended learning were explored required variation in the use of data analysis tools and techniques to enable a thorough analysis to occur.

#### *4.4.2 Data Display*

Data display is described as “an organised compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11). A common form of data display is extended text (such as many pages of field notes). However, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that other forms of displays may

be used such as matrices, graphs, charts and networks. In this study issues which were identified as barriers to the in situ delivery of higher education for refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises and the level of significance of each according to refugee education policymakers and practitioners was displayed as a matrix to assist with analysis rather than paragraphs or pages of text.

#### *4.4.3 Conclusion/Drawing Verification*

Conclusion/Drawing verification occurs almost immediately a qualitative researcher begins collecting data however, the competent researcher, suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) hold any conclusions “lightly, maintaining openness and skepticism” (p. 11). An example of conclusion drawing in this study was the assumption that all students participating in the ACU TBB programs were registered as refugees with the UNHCR. This was not the case.

#### *4.4.4 Analysis Tools and Techniques*

Cases 1.2, 2.1 and 3.1 on the praxis of social capital in the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB were analysed using a three-step process:

1. Each case was explored and analysed using the core social capital dimension of trust.
2. Each case was explored and analysed from the perspectives of level of manifestation, aspects of social life, emphasized dimensions, utility, core processes and fungibility across domains. (See Brunie's (2009) Approaches to Social Capital Framework in Chapter 3, Section 3.1.1).
3. Each case was explored and analysed from the perspective of Bonding, Bridging and Linking types of social capital (Woolcock, 2001).

This three-step process allowed for a thorough descriptive analysis of each case to occur, enabled the assigning of the approaches (*Relational, Collective or Generalized*) and types (*Bonding, Bridging* and *Linking*) of social capital to be identified.

Descriptive analyses were chosen as Wolcott (1990) states “description is the foundation upon which qualitative research is built” (p. 27).

Cases 1.3, 2.2, and 3.2 on the praxis of communities of practice were analysed by using descriptive analysis as the basis for exploring the role and contribution of communities of practice towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB. Similarly, for Cases 2.3 and 3.3 on the praxis of blended learning this descriptive analysis approach was also used to explore the role and contribution of blended learning towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.

## ***4.5 Data Reliability and Validity***

Reliability refers to the stability, accuracy, and precision of measurement. Exemplary case study design ensures that the procedures used are well documented and can be repeated with the same results over and over again. According to Neuman (2006) reliability in field research seeks to address the question: “Are research observations about a member or field event internally and externally consistent” (p. 404). Any meanings emerging from the data need to be “tested for their plausibility, their sturdiness, their ‘conformability’ – that is their *validity*” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11).

### *4.5.1 Internal and External Validity*

Validity is comprised of internal and external dimensions. Internal validity asks the question “How congruent are one’s findings with reality” (Merriman, 2002, p. 25). Triangulation is one well known strategy for shoring up internal validity.

Originally proposed by Foreman (1948) whereby validity was established through “pooled judgement” (p. 413) and independent investigators, the concept of triangulation was extended by Denzin (1970) to include four methods: multiple investigators, multiple theories, multiple sources of data or multiple methods to confirm emerging findings. Internal validity for this study was strengthened by using multiple methods which addressed different but complementary questions within the study. This helped to “assess the plausibility of threats to validity” (Robson, 1993, p. 291).

External validity reflects whether or not findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case or cases; the more variations in places, people, and procedures a case study can withstand and still yield the same findings, the more external validity. It should be noted however, as Holstein and Gubrium (1995) believe, that...

...One cannot expect answers on one occasion to replicate those on another because they emerge from different circumstances of production.

Similarly, the validity of answers derives not from their correspondence to meanings held within the respondent but from their ability to convey situated experiential realities in terms that are locally comprehensible (p. 9).

Techniques such as cross-case examination and within-case examination along with an expansive literature review helps ensure external validity (Soy, 1997). Considering that this study uses case studies it is important to note that achieving external validity can be difficult through a case (Neuman, 2006). These comments also reflect the need for the use of a combination of data gathering techniques, methods and appropriate research strategy for this study. The external validity of this study is the extent to which the findings may be generalized beyond this specific study with its focus on the

TBB programs and the implications of this study for future universal delivery of accredited higher education to refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises.

#### *4.5.2 Generalisability*

Generalisability refers to “the extent to which one can extend the account of a particular situation or population to other persons, times, or settings than those directly studied” (Maxwell, 2002, p. 52). Generalisability in qualitative research usually takes place through the “development of a theory that not only makes sense of the particular persons or situations studied, but also shows how the same process, in different situations, can lead to different results” (Becker, 1970, p. 240). Generalisability is normally based on the assumption that this theory may be useful in making sense of similar persons or situations, rather than on an explicit sampling process and the drawing of conclusions about a specified population through statistical inference (Yin, 2003). The findings of this thesis are intended therefore to be generalised specifically within the domain of refugee higher education in locations of protracted forced migration crises.

### **4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the methodology used in this study. The rationale for conducting a qualitative approach with case study research strategy was described and details of the methods of semi-structured interviews, online questionnaire and observation provided. Data analysis, reliability, validity and generalizability issues were discussed and examples provided for how these issues would be addressed or overcome in this study. The following chapter presents discussion and findings on the

barriers and constraints to higher education programs for refugees on the TBB and in locations of forced migration crises around the world.

# CHAPTER 5 - IN SITU HIGHER EDUCATION FOR REFUGEES ON THE THAI-BURMA BORDER: BARRIERS, CONSTRAINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.*

Nelson Mandela

## 5.1 *Introduction*

The following discussion in Chapter 5 is based on findings from reflective online questionnaire data provided by members of the Policy-maker and Practitioner participant group and supplemented by interview and online questionnaire data provided by members of the RTEC, ACU TBB academic and ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort participant groups. The chapter identifies barriers and constraints to the delivery of accredited in situ higher education to refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises, particularly on the TBB and offers suggestions/recommendations by participants and the researcher on how these barriers and constraints can be overcome. In so doing, Chapter 5 achieves the aim of answering the first research question posed in this study: *Why is the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises so scant?*

## 5.2 Barriers and Constraints

### 5.2.1 Protocol for Identifying Barriers and Constraints

Members of each participant group in this study have experienced the phenomena of higher education for refugees on the TBB in subtly different ways (policy-maker/practitioner/participant/provider). Therefore, members of each participant group were asked to identify perceived barriers and constraints to the delivery of in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB and in other locations of forced migration crises in subtly different ways. For example:

- Members of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group were asked via online questionnaire to “*Please rank in order of significance (where 1 = most significant and 8 = least significant) the following barriers you believe are constraining the deployment of higher education programs to refugees, delivered in locations of forced migration crises?*” and “*How can any barriers identified be overcome? Please describe?*”
- Members of the ACU TBB refugee student participant group were asked via face-to-face interview “*Why do think there are so few opportunities for refugees to receive higher education on the Thai-Burma Border and in refugee camps around the world?*” and “*How could this situation be improved so that more refugees around the world were able to receive higher education?*”
- Members of the RTEC (apart from the Convenor) and the ACU academics (apart from the on-ground tutor of the ACU TBB

Diploma in Liberal Studies program) participant group were asked via online questionnaire “What are the factors which you feel are constraining the delivery of higher education to refugees based in refugee camps around the world?” and “How could these constraints be addressed to enable more programs of university education to refugees based in refugee camps around the world?” The Convenor of the RTEC was also asked these questions via Skype and the on-ground tutor of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program was asked these questions via face-to-face interview.

The outcome of seeking similar data by asking participants to answer a similar question posed in a subtly different way was a comprehensive coverage of barriers, constraints and solutions identified by members of the RTEC, ACU TBB academics and refugee students and Policy-makers and Practitioners.

Initially, several barriers and constraints to the delivery of in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB were identified by the researcher when conducting literature searches for Chapter 2 and 3 of this thesis and from a series of informal discussions held between the researcher and fellow members and guests of the RTEC at committee meetings and via emails between the researcher and refugee education practitioners based on the TBB<sup>30</sup>. These barriers and constraints included: funding, the mobility of refugees (i.e. the freedom of movement for refugees to travel to universities located in host countries), a perceived lack of suitably qualified refugee students, lack of universities participating in delivering in situ education programs to

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<sup>30</sup> For information on how refugee education practitioners on the TBB were identified and approached to participate in this project see Chapter 4, Sections 4.3.1 – 4.3.5.

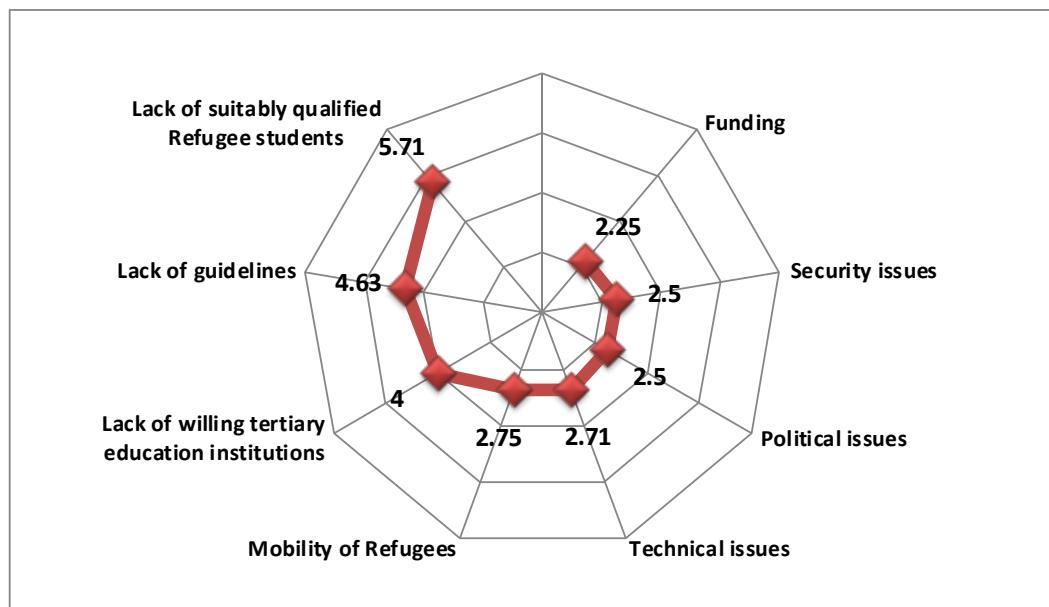
refugees, and several broad barriers and constraints such as a lack of guidelines on how to go about delivering in situ higher education to refugees, security issues, political issues and technical issues. These barriers and constraints were then compiled into a list and presented as part of an online questionnaire by the researcher to members of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group. To capture any barriers and constraints not already identified by the researcher, a final option of ‘Other’ was offered to participants to express their personal views. The barriers and constraints matrix of responses by members of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group is presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Barriers and Constraints Matrix – Policy-makers and Practitioners.**

Barrier or Constraint	1 Most Significant	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 least Significant	Rating Average
Funding	25.0% (2)	37.5% (3)	25.0% (2)	12.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.25
Mobility of Refugees	25.0% (2)	25.0% (2)	25.0% (2)	12.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	12.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.75
Lack of suitably qualified refugee students	0.0% (0)	14.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	14.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	42.9% (3)	0.0% (0)	28.6% (2)	5.71
Lack of willing tertiary education institutions	12.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	25.0% (2)	25.0% (2)	25.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	12.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	4.00
Lack of guidelines	0.0% (0)	12.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	50.0% (4)	12.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.63
Security issues	25.0% (2)	25.0% (2)	37.5% (3)	0.0% (0)	12.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.50
Political issues	37.5% (3)	12.5% (1)	37.5% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	12.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.50
Technical issues	28.6% (2)	0.0% (0)	42.9% (3)	28.6% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.71
Other	25.0% (1)	50.0% (2)	25.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.00

NB: 7 respondents out of the total Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group sample size of 8 responded to ‘Lack of suitably qualified refugee students’ and ‘Technical issues’, while 4 respondents out of the total sample size of 8 responded to ‘Other’.

In order of level of significance where 1 = most significant and 8 = least significant, members of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group ranked Funding (average level of significance rating = 2.25) followed by Security Issues (2.50), Political Issues (2.50), Technical Issues (2.71), Mobility of Refugees (2.75), Lack of willing tertiary education institutions (4.00), Lack of guidelines (4.63) and Lack of suitably qualified refugee students (5.71). The ‘Other’ option (2.00) will be discussed separately. A summary of the average level of significance for each identified barrier and constraint is presented in Figure 8. Items *closest* to the centre of Figure 8 represent the *most significant* issues according to the Policy-makers and Practitioners.



**Figure 8: Average level of significance.**

The reader is reminded that this thesis is highly qualitative in nature and that the simple quantitative representation of perceived barriers and constraints shown in Table 7 and average level of significance of each barrier and constraint shown in Figure 8 are used solely to generate discussion in the following sections of this chapter and thesis rather than for making quantitative assertions. Each of the barriers and constraints listed in Table 7 and any barriers and constraints identified as ‘Other’ will now be explored in order of significance ranking with supplementary discussion taken from the findings provided by members of the RTEC, ACU TBB academics and refugee student participant groups.

### *5.2.2 Funding*

Funding was raised by members of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group as the most significant barrier and constraint to delivering in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB. This issue was also identified by all but one member of the RTEC, ACU TBB academic and refugee student participant groups in this study. The perceived view of participants in this study of a lack of funding as a barrier or constraint for in situ refugee higher education validates similar findings in refugee literature described in Chapter 2. A refugee student participant provided the following thoughts on a lack of funding available for delivering in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB...

...this kind of education [delivery to refugees in a study-centre setting on the TBB]...I am sure the universities need to spend a lot of money and that education is very expensive in developing countries and of course back in Burma and everywhere. In the refugee camp the basic education is free so some. Thai people really don't see the value of education for

refugees. I think this [ACU Diploma type] program doesn't happen in other areas maybe because of money issues [R1].

Another refugee student participant [R3] believed that funding constraints was a reason why NGOs working on the TBB were not focused on the delivery of higher education programs to refugees...

...I'm not saying NGOs can't do this [deliver higher education to refugees on the TBB]. If they want to there are ways they can find to do it. But I think they just don't want to do it because nowadays NGOs have limited budgets and funding problems [R5].

One ACU academic participant offered...

...There is seen [by UNHCR and NGOs] to be much greater need in developing primary and secondary education to a particular level and that any funds, any monetary contributions and things like that are usually channelled and rightly so into this area to ensure that in the very least, ideally every single child is at least given an adequate basic education that takes them to a given...what I like to think as mid secondary, perhaps year 9, year 10. Then after that whatever is left in terms of contributions and finances I imagine that is the reason...that there is a limit to just how much [funding] is available and that's what limits the provision of tertiary education [A1].

Another ACU academic participant suggested funding constraints for those who have begun to undertake in situ higher education projects such as ACU and OUA was a consideration for not only those institutions as the current operational actors on the TBB but also for other universities considering delivering similar in situ programs to refugees in the future...

...Sustainable infrastructure on the ground to support the programs is an obvious necessity but it should not be the sole funding focus of universities in getting programs up and running [A3].

Any infrastructure deployed must be supplemented by in-kind elements wherever possible; such as volunteers to work within the infrastructure mix. The first step in this process, according to one member of the RTEC participant group who had also taught in the ACU TBB programs, was the...

...identification of suitable infrastructure to enable the courses to be undertaken [C3].

Conversely, as far as funding as a barrier and constraint is concerned, the convenor of the RTEC did not consider the inability of organisations such as the UNHCR to fund higher education programs to be a barrier to the delivery of such programs to refugee students on the TBB and in locations of protracted forced migration crises. Rather, the convenor suggested that...

...the universities can deliver the programs. It's a fairly cost effective way of delivering tertiary education if you can get tuition free places in academic programs then it's not a big issue interestingly enough. What we [the RTEC] are asking [university institutions] for is tuition free places, not a huge number and it's a drop in the ocean for a university's budget [C1].

This statement is correct in considering the total budget of a university but even one volunteer lecturer from a university participating in the ACU TBB would incur a cost of \$50,000 for that university to cover the volunteer's position.

The preceding five views on funding as a perceived barrier to the delivery of in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB show the perceptions of the five participants are indicative of their direct experiences involved in the phenomena. For example, Policy-makers and Practitioners require both a Macro and Micro understanding of the issues involved in developing and delivering education programs to refugees through partnerships rather than ‘going it alone’. Policy-makers and Practitioners understand the UNHCR needs to fully support refugees through the provision of food, shelter, healthcare and basic education and that other UN bodies such as UNESCO or local and international NGOs are more suited to focus on one or more of these issues; such as education and in the case of this particular study, accredited higher education.

Humanitarian relief organisations are reliant upon public and private donors and as Brown (2005) indicated in Chapter 2, Section 2.1.3, that as far as direct funding of refugee education programs other than basic, primary or secondary is concerned “...donors seem unsure whether PPE for refugees falls under short-term relief or long-term development” (p. 31). There should be no uncertainty if donors are reminded of the view expressed by Sinclair (2002a, 2002b) in Section 1.1 of this thesis that refugee education is viewed as the fourth or central pillar of humanitarian response, alongside nourishment, shelter and health services. The problem appears to be in the vague wording of ‘refugee education’ as a catch-all phrase and that nowhere in Sinclair’s ‘pillar’ statement is there delineation expressed between the different levels of education. Rather, an umbrella label to refugee education is applied which perpetuates the assumption that in practice refugee education funding is occurring at all levels from basic to higher education. This adversely affects the level of awareness of not only the

need for higher education programs in locations of protracted forced migration crises but more importantly the funding necessary to develop and deliver such programs. Regardless of ‘refugee education’ being considered a central pillar, it appears that competing agendas, scale and frequency of humanitarian disasters, not just refugee crises, all contribute to the pressures placed on humanitarian relief organisation budgets to direct funds towards food, shelter, healthcare and basic education, leaving any excess to be directed towards the missing link in refugee education of in situ higher education programs.

The refugee student participants in this study are direct beneficiaries of the ACU funded programs on the TBB. All refugee student participants indicated they believed funding to be a barrier or constraint to delivering in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB. However, when quizzed further as to why they believed funding to be an issue, many of the refugee students provided anecdotal evidence rather than providing any direct evidence from sources such as UNHCR reports or ‘official’ announcements made by the UNHCR or NGOs to the refugee camp populations in the camps along the TBB. The refugee students have no doubt from their experience living in Burma and from their subsequent time spent in camps along the TBB (in some cases more than 10 years) that the ACU type programs of providing tuition free places to students who cannot afford admission to university courses are not offered in their homeland or by the UNHCR or NGOs on the TBB. The question then becomes *‘how do refugees in the camps know of education opportunities available to them?’* From speaking with the ACU TBB refugee students it is evident the limitation of being physically contained within their camps does not impact upon a refugee’s ability to acquire knowledge of education opportunities available to them. Refugees are able to

acquire this knowledge through an extremely efficient ‘grapevine’ within and between refugee camps on the TBB. The refugee students interviewed in this study indicated that they were fully aware of all existing and potential opportunities for attaining higher education on the TBB from listening to camp announcements, reading camp notice boards, speaking with NGOs and from conversations with other refugees who had ‘heard from a friend of a friend...’.

Refugees seeking opportunities to continue their higher education on the TBB are also quick to gauge the value to them in participating in fully-funded accredited programs such as those delivered by ACU compared to unstructured and unaccredited programs offered by NGOs or by the refugee community themselves inside the camps. For example, one refugee student participant indicated...

...There are many programs that are being offered [in the camps], however these programs are not as advance[d] as the programs [which] are offered or designed by the universities [R4].

The ACU TBB academic participant’s thoughts on funding as a main barrier are balanced with an understanding that the UN through the UNHCR and UNESCO have decided to channel funding towards educating refugees with basic literacy, numeracy, primary and secondary education wherever possible. The views of the convenor of the RTEC, developed in consultation and collaboration with ACU over the timeline of the 3 ACU programs delivered on the TBB between 2003 and 2010, are made with a far greater understanding than the ACU TBB refugee students or ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies on-ground tutor of the costings and logistics involved in delivering the ACU education programs on the TBB. The comments of the convenor of the RTEC however suggest that the higher education programs on the

TBB such as those championed for by the RTEC and delivered by ACU are financially viable and where the onus is placed place on the university institutions to directly fund programs rather than dismissing funding outright as a main barrier. Therefore the comments of the convenor of the RTEC prompt the question “How do in situ higher education programs get delivered to refugees on the TBB if organisations such as the UNHCR have taken a decision to predominantly focus available funding from member countries and private donors on education programs other than higher education?” This question will be answered by exploring the role and contribution of social capital, communities of practice and blending learning in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 of this thesis. In particular, the embedded case studies within Chapter 6 will show how the RTEC as a grassroots organisation with a vision for in situ higher education for refugees in protracted forced migration crises can transition their vision to reality in collaboration with an operational actor such as the ACU.

### *5.2.3 Security and Political Issues*

After Funding, the issues of security (2.50) and politics (2.50) were identified equally as the next most significant barriers or constraints to the delivery of in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB. These issues will be jointly discussed in the following section of this chapter.

It was noted that several members of the refugee student participant group, when asked why they believed that the RTG was not encouraging higher education for refugees on the TBB, hesitated before responding and one refugee student in particular deferentially replied...

...I have no idea about that really [R2].

Other refugee student participants were more forthcoming. The saying that ‘Knowledge is power’ was identified as a recurring theme in responses by the RTEC and ACU TBB refugee student participant groups. A member of the RTEC participant group suggested “the fear some refugee host countries have of the impact of university education for refugees is based around a perception that refugees will want more, be less passive and cause trouble” [C4]. This perceived fear was also mentioned by a refugee student participant who noted with regards to some of the subject content being offered in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program in which he was studying...

...In some refugee camps the camp leader will not allow this kind of education. For example, like if they give this kind of education the refugee will become more educated...they [the camp leaders and the RTG] are afraid of education. That means if they [refugees] become educated they are not afraid...like human rights we need to study here...if we know human rights, what human rights are... because I know what are human rights, if there is something that is unfair in our refugee community then I know what is right, what is not fair [R5].

Another refugee student participant added...

...they [the RTG] don't even let the refugee study about human rights. It's a sensitive issue and they are afraid the refugee might have demands for more rights and stuff like that and if they are educated of course, yeah it's a concern [R8].

Another refugee student participant suggested...

...maybe if there are more refugees who are educated it will become a problem and they [the refugees] will be difficult to control [R4].

The issue of human rights was mentioned often by the refugee student participants in interviews. The refugee student cohort had recently completed a study module on the topic of human rights and perhaps this was still fresh in their minds and allowed the students to give examples of how human rights, or how a lack of those rights manifests itself in their attempt to gain higher education as refugees on the TBB.

One refugee student participant suggested...

...If we said we are going to study Human Rights then they will want to know what these students are going to do after this class, are they going to go against us or what because without knowledge [gained from these ACU courses] we appear to know nothing and would simply have to obey whatever they said...but if we know then we can say something to them [R5].

Aligned with this perceived fear of an educated refugee population is the perceived distrust of the Burmese people, particularly Burmese ethnic minorities, by the RTG. A refugee student participant commented...

...The only reason these refugee camps were established 20 years ago as my understanding, was as a buffer for the Thai government because still until today there are [Burmese] family members who belong to the armed struggles along the Thai-Burma border. These are the buffer zones, so if anything happens.... The Thai will never ever trust the Burmese people [R1].

This reaction by the Burmese refugee student is understandable when the long-standing persecution of the Karen ethnic minority to which the student belongs is taken into account.

The political situation on the TBB was also mentioned by several members of the RTEC, ACU BB academic and ACU TBB refugee student participant groups as a reason why in situ higher education was not being offered on the TBB as compared with basic primary and secondary education. One refugee student participant noted that as the RTG had not signed the refugee convention...

...they [the RTG] only allow refugees here [on the TBB] on humanitarian grounds and of course they don't call the camps refugee camps, they call them temporary shelter camps, so in this case they will only allow basic education for refugees to get education to be able to read and write so they will not be able to get the opportunity to get to university or a Thai school or for further study [R1].

Another refugee student participant commented on the similarity of the lack of higher education for local Thai citizens on the TBB as compared to refugees. The refugee student participant offered the following thoughts on the RTG requesting assistance for their local citizens as part of any education intervention by international NGOs on the TBB...

...I think the other thing is they are afraid that the refugees will kind of achieve something better than their own citizens because in this area when you look, this is the border area so even their own Thai citizens do not have the opportunity to have higher educations or tertiary education or something like that. That is the other reason why they don't want the international community to see because refugees are getting it why these people are not getting it, their own people. So I think anytime when the NGOs come in to help the refugees they [the RTG] ask if whether you [the NGO] can help our own people as well. You have to do it for both,

you have to help the Thai villagers as well as the camps. So, most of the NGOs have to deal with these types of problems I think [R1].

A member of the ACU academic participant group supported the refugee student's comments...

...I see the problem here being the Thai government making available tertiary education and seeing that blossoming and developing and pressure will be put on to say excuse me but what about recognizing these supposedly displaced people who have been for 20 years, how about recognizing their refugee status and in so doing that it will open up a Pandora's box for the Royal Thai Government that means that they will have to start coming to terms with the international conventions on refugees [A1].

The dichotomy of the RTG as a long-standing host country of refugee populations on the one hand yet being a non-signatory to the UN Refugee Convention on the other as described by the ACU academic above was succinctly stated by a member of the RTEC participant group as...

...broad indifference to the UN Refugee convention [C2].

One refugee student participant believed that the unique structure of the ACU, that it is an educational institution and not an NGO or UN body, was the defining factor which has allowed the organisation to deliver their programs 'under the radar'.

The refugee student participant commented...

...This ACU refugee program [the Diploma in Liberal Studies], it has nothing to do with the NGOs. And let's say if the NGOs want to do it probably they won't be able to do it because the Government will not let them. They can propose it to the RTG, I think they have done this is in

previous times but the government will never ever let that happen especially with higher education, tertiary education [R1].

#### *5.2.4 Technical Issues*

Technical issues were identified by members of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group as the next most significant (2.71) perceived barrier or constraint to the delivery of in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises. The main technical issue according to members of the RTEC, ACU TBB academic and ACU TBB refugee student participant groups was the lack of Internet access inside the refugee camps. As indicated in Chapter 2, Section 2.1.3.1, the RTG does not currently allow access the Internet in camps along the TBB. Any education program delivered inside the TBB camps must follow RTG regulations. A refugee student participant suggested if guidelines were not adhered to and a university or NGO attempted to provide education programs via the Internet then police intervention would result...

...If there was a similar program [to the ACU program] in the camps, especially in Umpiem camp, the Thai police will come.... [R6].

Dundalk Institute of Technology which began a pilot program in April 2010 indicated they hoped to...

...use technology and the internet both as a way to deliver distance learning to the students in the form of online classes and to project manage and develop the course content from Ireland with our partners on the border [P4].

With Internet access not permitted at present Dundalk indicated they had applied to the Thai MOI for satellite access to Internet for their students...”but we are still awaiting a response [P4]. The participant from Dundalk continued...

...I am looking for some political representation here in Ireland in the hopes that we can be allowed to deliver the programme we had envisaged from the start, with the students using the internet as a tool for research and having regular live chats with tutors in Ireland [P4].

Associated with a lack of Internet access within the TBB camps is the issue of an inconsistent supply of electricity within the TBB refugee camps. This issue was identified during interviews with members of the Refugee and ACU academic participant groups. Power supply within the TBB camps is generally unreliable during the day and unavailable during the night (Australian Karen Foundation, 2009; Holdcroft, 2008; Independent Mon News Agency, 2010). Internet access, if allowed for online learning, would only be possible when electrical power is available. Any education program delivered in the camps would need to be flexible to cater for extended periods where students were off-line as a result of power outages. This scenario could be overcome with the use of alternative sources of power such as solar power generation and storage.

#### *5.2.5 Mobility of Refugees*

In this thesis mobility of refugees refers to freedom of movement permitted to refugees to travel within their host country. Regarding the issue of restrictions on mobility, a member of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group stated...

...Mobility: this is particularly true of the situation in Thailand as it is not a signatory to the Refugee Convention [P2].

Mobility is arguably easier for individuals who have registered as refugees with the UNHCR and who are residing in camps in host countries which are signatories to the 1951 refugee Convention. Many of the refugee students interviewed for this study indicated that they had not registered with the UNHCR. This situation mirrors July 2010 TBBC data for refugee sites on the TBB with population figures. These figures show that approximately 1/3 of the total refugee camp population measured by the TBBC along the TBB is unregistered compared to the UNHCR registration figures.

If a person residing in the TBB camps decides not to register then they forego the full auspice of the UNHCR and if they travel outside the camps they run the risk of arrest and deportation. One refugee student participant who had been living in refugee camps on the TBB for more than 10 years indicated they had not registered as a refugee as they believed the act of registration would place restrictions upon them rather than offer a sense of protection. The student's family still resides in Burma and the student has no intention to resettle in a third country. Furthermore, as ACU had placed no restriction on potential students being registered as refugees, the student was able to enroll and take part in the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies program. The student matter-of-factly stated their situation...

...I just come into the camps and study and go back sometimes to my village in Burma...just go back and forth [across the TBB] [R8].

This situation highlights several legal, safety and security issues such as enforcement of travel restrictions by the camp authorities, UNHCR and the RTG on the one hand and the potential danger people existing within the warehoused crisis on the TBB are prepared to place themselves in to participate in higher education delivered outside of a refugee environment on the other hand. The ACU TBB program allows this refugee

student to continue their education past post 10 levels on the TBB. A fellow member of refugee student participant group added further...

...They [refugees] do not have [Thai] citizenship so it is very difficult for them to apply to a Thai university [R2].

#### *5.2.6 Lack of Willing Tertiary Education Institutions*

A lack of willing tertiary education institutions was identified by members of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group as the next most significant (4.0) perceived barrier or constraint to the delivery of in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises. The term ‘willing’ is used loosely in this discussion. Perhaps more correctly, higher education institutions are simply unaware of examples of work-in-progress programs such as those delivered by the ACU and OUA which are providing higher education to refugees in a location of protracted forced migration crisis. Once universities are made aware of the demand for higher education courses by refugees, the existence of the ACU and OUA programs and how these two organisations have managed to overcome perceived barriers and constraints, the ‘willingness’ of higher education institutions may become less of an identifiable issue.

A member of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group indicated that a lack of willing higher education institutions has been the biggest barrier in their experience...

...as recognition from other tertiary education is almost impossible. Also recognition of the student’s achievement helps the student gain more confidence and better paid jobs to help the micro economic of the community. Not all students will be able to receive scholarships or travel

out of the camps to study in recognised Thai institutions, so it's very important for the students to receive qualification inside the camps if we really want to develop their community [P5].

As ACU and OUA can testify, embarking upon a fledgling course of action to design, deploy and manage a program of in situ higher education for refugees in a location of protracted forced migration crisis would be made easier with guidelines to follow. However, as there are so few examples of this form of education delivery available there have been no guidelines to follow. This is a double-edged sword for universities and educational NGOs as illustrated in the following discussion.

#### *5.2.7 Lack of Guidelines*

A lack of guidelines was identified by members of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group as the next most significant (4.63) perceived barrier or constraint to the delivery of in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises. This barrier or constraint refers to guidelines created by UN bodies such as the UNHCR or UNESCO for organisations such as NGOs to follow for the development and delivery of in situ higher education programs for refugees or specific guidelines created by NGOs themselves to follow. The lack of guidelines issue can be best described as a symbiotic relationship – if there have been no in situ higher education programs delivered up to now by the UNHCR or UNESCO to refugees in protracted forced migration crises, then there has been no need for the creation of guidelines specific to higher education for refugees. This scenario varies to that of emergency situations which form the basis

of INNE's emergency standards handbook<sup>31</sup>. In the absence of guidelines, organisations such as ACU and OUA have needed to follow the 'softly-softly' approach and experiential path to achieve sustainable programs on the TBB. Each partner university involved in course delivery in the ACU program has their own protocols to follow but must also work under a collaborative umbrella for the effective and efficient delivery of the programs.

#### *5.2.8 Lack of Suitably Qualified Refugee Students*

A lack of suitably qualified refugee students was identified by members of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group as the next most significant (5.71) perceived barrier or constraint to the delivery of in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises. This barrier or constraint refers to the possession of accredited and/ or verifiable qualifications by a refugee which would enable the refugee to matriculate into any higher education course offered to them on the TBB. The problematic issue of refugee students being able to demonstrate to enrolling institutions the content and level of any prior learning was described in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1 where Purnell and Kengkunchorn (2008) identified the issue as a main area that serves as a barrier to refugee access to higher education. When Policy-makers and Practitioners were asked to describe the significance of having accreditation as part of any higher educations delivered on the TBB the following responses were given by the participants:

...It is going to become more essential [P5].

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<sup>31</sup> See (INEE, 2004) for INEE Minimum Standards Handbook.

...The qualification, especially when combined with a common good approach, not only replaces some of the intellectual capital that has left refugee camps to be resettled in third countries but leads to a leadership style based on sound universal principles and inclusive, peaceful methods [P2].

...Whilst the gaining of recognised qualifications by refugees, and the social interaction between refugees and teachers and between refugees and other students is beneficial, their ability to work within their communities in locations of forced migration is what I see as of paramount importance [P1].

...The recognized qualification for refugees is needed to put pressure on the Burmese Military dictators. The Burmese military plan for the four cut policy in the Karen state, and one of them is “cut of education.” So as long as we recognized refugee education and give them recognition from other learning institution it will send a message to the Burmese military dictators that despite its effort to destroy the ethnics in Burma there are people outside that care for these forcefully displace people. It will also help put Thai authorities to open ways for other opportunities such as work etc. From my experience I have seen that in border city's like Mae Sod<sup>32</sup> or Chang Mai employer prefer migrant workers as they are much cheaper to run their business but it is always the issue of qualification that they cannot employ migrants in higher positions in the company [P4].

...The degree programs have many added values, such as motivating the younger generations, immediate use of knowledge and skills and develop the academic study circle [P3].

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<sup>32</sup> The term ‘Mae Sod’ is used interchangeably with Mae Sot.

Depending on the age of the child or cognitive ability for the adolescent at time of their entry into the TBB refugee camps, refugees are educated as part of basic numeracy, literacy, primary or secondary programs within the camps by the UNHCR and local and international educational NGOs. However, as was identified in Chapter 2, there is scant opportunity for refugees to participate in higher education inside the camps let alone accredited programs currently being delivered by ACU located near the camps in villages on the TBB. A refugee student in the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies program described the current situation for higher education seeking refugees on the TBB as follows...

...in the camps we have primary level, the primary school for whoever wants to join the primary school. But to be able to join in the university level we have to learn the post 10 levels, after we complete, graduate this course [Post 10] it depends on our skills, if our skills reach the level to join a university then we have a chance and we have an opportunity to apply... [R8].

The associated barrier of not having a qualified or trained workforce of teachers within the refugee community is also a double-edged sword. A refugee student participant indicated that NGOs do provide training for teachers and work together with the KED to tailor the training to the current situation however it is the trained, qualified refugees who if willing to move to a third country are often the first to leave. This teacher brain drain adds to that of the student brain drain noted by the KED of students graduating from the LMTC in Mae La camp (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1). It also raises the question of where the refugee teachers and students see the path forward for themselves in the protracted refugee crisis on the TBB as compared to the KED. The KED see a future return to Burma for the Burmese refugees (including the

teachers and students) whereas the teachers and students, faced with an exiled limbo on the TBB are pragmatically leaving the TBB to resettle in a third country.

### 5.2.9 *Other Issues*

Members of all participant groups identified several other issues which they perceived to be barriers and constraints to the delivery of in situ accredited higher education programs to refugees on the TBB and in locations of protracted forced migration crises. These issues included an overwhelming lack of awareness of protracted forced migration crises in general and the need and/ or demand for in situ refugee higher education programs, limited English language proficiency, socio-economic issues and lack of collaboration.

#### 5.2.9.1. *Lack of awareness.*

This study found a lack of awareness of refugee tertiary education on a number of levels. Participants indicated there was a perceived lack of awareness by the general public of protracted forced migration crises, a lack of the need for in situ higher education programs to refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises and a lack of awareness of by the general public, other university institutions and UN bodies of programs such as those being delivered by ACU and OUA which have already provided and continue to provide in situ higher education programs to refugees on the TBB. A member of the ACU academic participant group indicated they felt the lack of awareness lead to...

...little political will - although there are small signs that this might change [A1].

The ACU academic illustrated the point of a lack of awareness by UN bodies of the need for in situ higher education for refugees by indicating that there was no mention of this level of refugee education in the UN's landmark Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

Regarding a lack of awareness by the general public to the plight of refugees on the TBB and in protracted forced migration crises, one refugee student participant succinctly stated the case...

...I think people around the world do not know about the real situation of refugees and refugee students [R3].

The convenor of the RTEC commented how the lack of awareness and the difficulty of the task in designing, developing, delivering and sustaining in situ higher education on the TBB was partly the result of...

...a crisis of imagination...that people don't see the possibility, it's too hard and sometimes it is too hard, I mean it takes a hell of a lot of work [C1].

A committee member of the RTEC suggested there was a lack of awareness to the “educational rights for refugees” [C2]. This suggestion may be viewed from the perspective of the refugee student who is unaware of their right to merit-based education or from the perspective of potential education providers such as educational NGOs who could use the issue of educational rights for refugees as a social justice ‘call to arms’ in any effort to advocate for the delivery of higher education to refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises.

### 5.2.9.2. English language skills.

The issue of English language skills was suggested as a major barrier to refugees participating in any higher education programs on the TBB. A Burmese refugee student participant noted that a lack of fluency in English meant that it was difficult enough for a refugee to take an entrance exam and be accepted into a program let alone fully engage in program components such as classroom discussions or conducting research into program subjects. The refugee student commented that the combination of the lack of proficiency in the English language, poor communication skills, unfamiliarity with academic language and researching and referencing skills...

...means most of the Burmese people [refugees] cannot join the university level but this kind of education is what we need...how can we even research? [R5].

### 5.2.9.3. Socio-economic issues.

A refugee participant commented that in regards to refugees living in camps on the TBB...

...most of the refugees are poor and they cannot support their education, it is very difficult for them to go for further study. Their parents cannot support them for that reason. [R3].

This scenario is certainly not unique to refugees on the TBB or in locations of protracted forced migration crises around the world. The lack of income to support their families and the ability to effectively communicate in the language of their host country is a universal issue for refugees.

One refugee student participant linked the issues of fluency in the English language and communication ability, socio-economic status and matriculation issues

together by illustrating how English language and communications skills for refugees from Burma were often dependent on the socio-economic status of the refugee in their home country prior to crossing a border and becoming a refugee. The refugee student participant suggested Burmese refugees from lower socio-economic backgrounds found it difficult to compete with other refugees possessing English language skills...

...to qualify for this [ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies] entrance exam, to pass this entrance exam there were over 120 students taking the exam but only 5 or 6 students qualified to this program. That is showing that there are many refugees who for many reasons, that they are poor or have poor English do not qualify for this level of education. [R2].

These comments by the refugee student participant also give weight to the argument for the consideration by educational NGOs of the provision of higher education programs to refugees in the predominant language of their country of origin if there is a significantly large enough population of higher education refugee learners to make delivery feasible. Educational NGOs who scope their program delivery solely around the English language are disengaging any qualified, Non-English speaking members of the under-served refugee learner population.

#### *5.2.9.4. Lack of collaboration.*

The final issue identified as a perceived barrier or constraint to the delivery of in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises was a perceived lack of collaboration by university institutions, UN bodies and NGOs. One ACU academic participant described the issues as a...

... ‘go it alone’ mentality of the service providers [A3].

The preceding sections of this chapter have described several issues identified by participants in this study which they feel are barriers and constraints to the delivery of in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises. The following section of the chapter addresses these issues to offer suggestions by participants and the researcher on how these barriers and constraints may be overcome.

### **5.3 Addressing Barriers and Constraints**

#### *5.3.1 Addressing Funding Issues*

Members of all participant groups in this study offered suggestions/recommendations on how they believed funding barriers and constraints for in situ delivery of higher education to refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises could be overcome. A member of the RTEC participant group believed an obvious solution to ‘ramp up’ the scale of delivery of higher education programs on the TBB was to replicate the ACU and OUA TBB programs in other locations on the TBB through...

...gaining the material support of additional universities [C2].

This pragmatic approach reduces the financial and logistical burden on ACU and OUA to provide increasing numbers of tuition free places as word of the higher education opportunities spreads along the TBB refugee grapevine.

The inclusion of other universities into a suite of institutions offering in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB or in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises, whether they be Australian-based universities, US-based or

universities in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia or South America opens up the opportunity to deliver programs in languages other than English, and feasibly in the refugee's mother tongue.

The ACU TBB program model is based on a blended learning approach whereby online delivery of course material is supplemented by short, intense periods of face-to-face teaching. This model requires significant funding for face-to-face components associated with travel to the TBB for the designated ACU teacher or tutor, transportation once in-country, accommodation, meals and numerous incidentals during the mission. While some costs have been borne by ACU teachers and tutors, the total cost of even brief visits to the ACU TBB study centre is restrictive financially and in the amount of time it takes to travel to the semi-remote study centre. A possible solution to this scenario is to move towards a fully online model of education delivery. This may seem a simple solution on the surface however it must be remembered that on the TBB Internet access inside refugee camps is forbidden by the RTG and that an existing accredited higher education programs provided inside a TBB refugee camp is the fully face-to-face Dundalk Institute of Technology program initiated in Nu Po camp in April 2010.

Other recommendations mentioned by participants in this study to overcoming perceived barriers and constraints of funding of in situ higher education programs for refugees on the TBB and in locations of protracted forced migration crises included fundraising as one-off or annual appeals, applications to philanthropic foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation<sup>33</sup> and George Soros's

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.gatesfoundation.org>

Open Society Foundations<sup>34</sup>, and requests to UN bodies such as the UNHCR and UNESCO. Although each solution has merits, there are drawbacks upon closer examination. One-off appeals need to be targeted to donors. This begs the question “*what media should be used to target donors?*” and the answer to the question is “*it depends on the type of donor*”. For example, appeals held on university campuses may be well received by simpatico students and teachers however the amount of money raised may be limited by the student’s own financial constraints. Any finances raised through these methods must be accounted for, preferably in a transparent and ethical manner. Once again, how this would occur would be dependent upon the fundraisers. For example, in the case of universities, any established protocols for fundraising and the use of funds which exist at the institution would need to be followed. For grassroots organisations, no such protocols may exist and the donor would contribute based on trust. Therefore, discussion in the following section of this chapter will focus on funding solutions for universities.

A potential financially sustainable and feasible solution for university institutions to fund either tuition free places for refugees or teaching ‘fieldwork’ components of programs is the concept of endowment. A simplistic model of endowment for higher education for refugees was suggested by one respondent [A2] and could start modestly and be based around an initial deposit from fundraising which is invested by the institution at market rates. The annual investment returns are then divided by ratio into a large (e.g. 95%) and small (e.g. 5%) component. The 95% component of interest dividends received could be utilised for funding tuition free places, travelling ‘mission’ scholarships for teachers or tutors to provide face-to-face

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.soros.org/>

interaction with the refugee students or a combination of both. The remaining 5% of annual interest dividend would be reinvested to accumulate additional funds for each subsequent year of the education program. The balance of the endowment may be added to by the institution as a result of any ad-hoc or ongoing fundraising activities. This recommendation is advantageous by providing a stream of perpetual funding yet is not reliant upon one-off or ongoing injections of new funds as the initial deposit is built upon annually and never depleted.

Responses from participants to finding solutions to any funding issues of in situ higher education programs on the TBB appear realistic and workable within current program models and expandable in the case of exponential growth in the number of programs if the ACU and OUA TBB delivery models are migrated to deployment in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises. In summary, the issue of funding, according to a member of the RTEC participant group should revolve around seeking and maintaining levels of...

...adequate funding (or at least the discerning use of what is available)

[C7].

### 5.3.2 *Addressing Security and Political Issues*

It must be remembered that the forced migration crisis on the TBB is approaching twenty-five years. The term '*protracted*' is truly apt for the crisis. It would be naïve and presumptuous for the researcher to offer '*the*' solution/s to the crisis when the UN, Thailand, Burma and partner members have been working towards a peaceful resolution to the crisis for nearly a quarter of a century. The following discussion provides suggested areas where focus is given to safety and

security issues for all persons involved in delivering higher education programs to refugees on the TBB. This higher education focus can then take its place in the overall dialogue of political resolution.

A member of the RTEC participant group indicated that a starting point to addressing any security and political issues was for proclaimed rights of refugees to education...

...be promoted, enacted and monitored [C5].

Similar sentiments were echoed by a member of the ACU academic participant group. The participant stated there needed to be...

...accountability of national governments to international refugee conventions [A1].

Another ACU academic participant suggested a similar macro approach be taken which involved...

...Pressure from the UN and...direct involvement and oversight by UN representatives [A3].

Regarding micro-level solutions for improving the safety and security of refugee students, one solution involves the actual process of registration of stateless persons as refugees by the UNHCR. By being allowed to register as refugees with the UNHCR, unregistered students from the TBB camps would have an additional layer of protection of rights available to them. However, as has been previously mentioned, a moratorium on the registration of new arrivals in the TBB has been put in place by the RTG. Regardless of registration in the foreseeable future, according to one member of the RTEC participant group, there needs to be...

...safe refuge in study centres inside or outside camps [C6].

This can only occur in close consultation with the RTG and the ACU and OUA higher education providers working on the TBB. A member of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group suggested...

...in the Thai case, someone with local knowledge who knows the local MoI and MoE officials as well as the army and police is vital to carry out the informal negotiations that work to change matters in Thailand [P4].

Perhaps one of the most practical suggestions to security and political barriers and constraints was to work within the existing ‘system’ on the TBB. A member of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group suggested the way forward is...

...’sponsorship’ or partnership with UN organisations who have MOUs with Governments concerned [P2].

In regards to the issue of ‘*knowledge is power*’, perhaps the RTG and refugee students should be reminded of the words of American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer John Dewey. More than half a century before the TBB protracted forced migration crisis began, Dewey (1916) stated that an egalitarian society...

...must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social change without introducing disorder (p. 67).

The terms ‘*egalitarian*’ and ‘*refugee*’ are rarely spoken together but perhaps as a way forward to resolving the refugee camp as campus paradox on the TBB and in other locations of protracted forced migration crises the two terms should become synonymous. Regardless, on the TBB for the RTG, refugee students, researchers,

academics, higher education institutions, UNHCR, UNESCO and educational NGOs...

...the thoughts of future research and policy discussions should concentrate on imagining what an educated refugee population would look like and how it would differ from what we see today...we must allow ourselves to project what different expectations we would have of the future if the next generation of stateless individuals received a good-quality education (Waters & LeBlanc, 2005, p. 11).

### *5.3.3 Addressing Technical Issues*

Several suggestions were offered by members of all participant groups to address the identified technical barriers and constraints in delivering in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB. Any solution to the issue of the RTG not allowing Internet access in the camps is more problematic as the stance of denying Internet access to refugees inside the TBB camps by the RTG has been consistent over many years. Common suggestions of participants can be summarized by one member of the RTEC participant group who indicated the most suitable way forward was to...

...work with local authorities for access of the refugees to Internet and continue to lobby at the national level [C5].

This is precisely what McKinsey (2007a) suggested in her report of the lobbying conducted by the Council of Business Leaders<sup>35</sup> for refugees in Ban Dong Yan refugee camp to receive Internet access. Lobbying is also the course of action taken by

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<sup>35</sup> Launched at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in 2005, the Council of Business Leaders is a network of major multinational corporations committed to developing multi-level, multi-year partnerships with UNHCR to empower forcibly displaced people and help find durable solutions for them (UNHCR, 2010b).

Dundalk Institute of Technology to enable their programs to move from face-to-face delivery to a blended learning model of online and face-to-face deliveries.

A number of participants in the study suggested the issue of inconsistent power supply within the TBB camps could be overcome with the use of alternative power supplies such as solar cells and diesel generators. Participants suggested however that the integration of these alternative power systems would need to be funded and maintained and also meet with RTG approval.

The issue of having personnel on the ground was suggested as a partial solution to addressing technical issues associated with program delivery. The value of having on-ground personnel was raised by members of the Policy-makers and Practitioners, RTEC and ACU academic participant groups. A member of the RTEC participant group indicated that while there was a definite need for collaboration between many parties, in regards to supporting the actual delivery of any online learning...

...we have shown that having online education in a foreign language (English) [compared to the refugee's first language] does not work without suitable support on the ground and adequate internet access [C4].

A member of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group agreed that what was vital in the delivery of any education program on the TBB was...

...on site academic support at tertiary levels [P1].

Furthermore, the onsite academic support could be linked back to a funding solution as the participant continued by suggesting the use of...

...qualified volunteers to teach in already existing institutions along the Burma-Thai border [A1].

#### *5.3.4 Addressing Refugee Mobility Issues*

The issue of refugee mobility is similar to the issues of security and politics, as being difficult to resolve due to the entrenched nature of the TBB crisis. Participants from all groups indicated that there were two sub-issues involved; the RTG signing the UN Refugee Convention and registration with the UNHCR by persons living in the TBB camps. Unless the RTG becomes a signatory to the Refugee Convention it appears unlikely, based on current policy, to be any change by the RTG towards easing restrictions on movement by refugees within Thailand. Whilst refugees are not permitted to travel freely within Thailand, the opportunity to study at Thai universities will continue to elude refugees and realistic opportunities for higher education study will be ones such the in situ programs delivered by ACU, OUA and potential subsequent program providers. In regards to refugee registration, persons living in the camps avail themselves of the auspice of the UNHCR through the process of registration. However, mitigating circumstances such as moratoriums imposed by the RTG on registration of new arrivals into camps on the TBB and the ‘flexibility’ some stateless people living in the camps feel non-registration allows them in transiting back and forth across the TBB make any blanket solution to the mobility of refugees another difficult task. If at such time the RTG bows to international requests to become a signatory to the Refugee Convention, it should be a priority for all unregistered persons in the camps to register with the UNHCR.

### 5.3.5 Addressing the Issue of a Lack of Willing Tertiary Education Institutions

Participants in this study indicated the issues of lack of willing tertiary education institutions, lack of awareness and collaboration were connected. These three issues will now be discussed. A member of the RTEC participant group suggested that while...

...RTEC members and their university partners do communicate with the community more broadly to increase awareness it is a slow process [C1].

One member of the ACU academic participant group suggested a simple and cost-effective way of overcoming barriers to in situ higher education for refugees is to

...improve literature publications about successes [A2].

Rather than publishing, a member of the RTEC participant group suggested the RTEC, ACU, OUA and the Jesuit universities involved in the TBB programs should engage in...

...a sustained and stronger promotional campaign to senior decision makers within targeted universities [C7].

By doing so, champions within these targeted universities could be identified to promote the issue of higher education for refugees on the TBB to students, faculties and administrators on their campuses. A member of the ACU academic participant group suggested an international focus should be applied to increasing the awareness of the need for higher education for refugees on the TBB and the successfully delivered programs by ACU and OUA. Whilst one ACU academic participant succinctly stated the case for...

...more exposure in the international media [A3].

This raises the question, “*Which media?*” There have been several articles on the ACU TBB programs published in ACU and Catholic online newsletters and journals. It is recommended by participants that this process be continued and other mediums such as radio and television be utilised for promoting refugee higher education on the TBB. The issue of awareness highlights a somewhat vicious circle of barriers to in situ higher education for refugees on the TBB in that a participant from ACU noted once interested universities become aware it is feasible to operate accredited university programs...

...the main obstacle then becomes funding [A2].

The participant continued by stating that...

...ACU is committed to in situ higher education of refugees because it takes its mission statement seriously [A2].

The ACU Mission statement is:

...Australian Catholic University shares with universities world-wide a commitment to quality in teaching, researching and service. It aspires to be a community characterised by free inquiry and academic integrity. The University's inspiration, located within 2,000 years of Catholic intellectual tradition, summons it to attend to all that is of concern to human beings. It brings a distinctive spiritual perspective to the common tasks of higher education. Through fostering and advancing knowledge in education, health, commerce, the humanities, the sciences and technologies, and the creative arts, Australian Catholic University seeks to make a specific contribution to its local, national and international communities. The University explicitly engages the social, ethical and religious dimensions of the questions it faces in teaching and research, and service. In its endeavours, it is guided by a fundamental concern for justice and equity, and for the dignity of all human beings. Australian Catholic University has a primary responsibility to provide excellent higher education for its entire diversified and dispersed student body. Its ideal graduates will be highly competent in their chosen fields, ethical in their behaviour, with a

developed critical habit of mind, an appreciation of the sacred in life, and a commitment to serving the common good (ACU, 2011).

Focusing on a lack of awareness rather than lack of willing university institutions, national government support for any subsequent TBB program was suggested by a member from the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group. The participant commented that...

...Government level support through infrastructure could support volunteers and others to work in the challenging areas and a structure in donor countries to inform and support volunteers to visit and contribute to the delivery of the programs [P2].

This government support should be provided where possible by the RTG *and* by the national governments of any subsequent education providers such as the Australian government in the case of the ACU and OUA and the Irish government in the case of Dundalk Institute of Technology. Combining the themes of National government support and volunteer support, a member of the RTEC participant group felt...

...Government funding (AusAID and AVI) would help [C4].

### *5.3.6 Addressing the Issue of a Lack of Guidelines*

The issue of a lack of guidelines for delivering refugee higher education programs in locations of protracted forced migration crises has not stopped ACU, OUA or JC-HEM. These organisations have experientially developed and managed their programs by following their own university's codes of conduct and protocols wherever possible. An umbrella approach to the TBB scenario whereby guidelines are developed could be achieved by following the suggestion made by a member of the ACU academic participant group for a...

...closer working relationship (and sharing of resources) by the various service providers [A2].

A member of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group indicated...

...I have shared our guidelines with the Jesuit project I refer to elsewhere and intend to write fuller guidelines for other universities which have shown interest. INEE is also working on research which could lead to generic guidelines [P3].

The development of generic guidelines for refugee higher education by INNE seems the logical step as it would complete the missing link in the organisation's 'Minimum standards for education in emergencies, chronic crises and early reconstruction'.

### *5.3.7 Addressing the Issue of English Language Skills*

Participants in the study offered two basic solutions to the issue of limited English language skills of refugee students. It was suggested by participants that a language other than English could be used in the delivery of courses. This would be feasible in future program deliveries on the TBB if a Thai university or at least Burmese/Karen speaking teachers and tutors were involved. In other locations of protracted forced migration crises it was suggested by a member of the Policy-makers and Practitioners participant group that for example...

...French language could be used for delivery in some African refugee situations [P5].

## ***5.4 Final thoughts by Policy-makers and Practitioners***

When offered the opportunity to provide final thoughts on the most beneficial outcome of accredited university-level education for refugees in locations of

forced migration crises, three Policy-maker and Practitioner participants responded.

Two participants gave brief outcomes which included the need for “knowledge development to influence life as a refugee” [P2] and “the ability, once qualified, of refugees to work in and for their communities” [P6]. However, one participant gave a detailed response which related directly to the context of TBB. The participant described how...

...In our discussions with people from the KRC-EE the issue that they are most concerned about is the brain drain caused by the resettlement programme. The most educated, the teachers and community organisers, are the most eligible for resettlement so the KRC-EE hoped that providing access to third level education on the border might help address the situation. Students on the GBS programme will be given the opportunity to work with camp based CBO's when they have completed the course and act as teachers and mentors to the next batch of students [P3].

This is a salient point to conclude the discussion on the barriers and constraints for the delivery of higher education to refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises as it returns to heart of the challenge faced by organisations such as KRC-EE first described in Section 1.2 Problem Statement. The KRC-EE are understandably concerned and are reinforcing this point to all organisations such as ACU who are attempting to engage with the KRC-EE in the provision of higher education ton to the refugees which the KRC-EE represent.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has identified barriers and constraints to the delivery of in situ higher education to refugees on the TBB. In summary, members of all participant

groups in the study indicated *Funding* as the main barrier or constraint followed by *Security Issues, Political Issues, Technical Issues, Mobility of Refugees, Lack of willing tertiary education institutions, Lack of guidelines and Lack of suitably qualified refugee students*. Other barriers and constraints identified were a lack of awareness of protracted forced migration crises, particularly the situation on the TBB, lack of need for higher education by refugees, English language and communication skills of refugees on the TBB and issues surrounding the low socio-economic status of ethnic Burmese minorities who cross the TBB to settle in refugee camps along the TBB.

Several solutions to the identified barriers and constraints were suggested by participants. These solutions included increasing efforts to advocate for refugees and refugee higher education on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises, sustainable funding and, in the case of the TBB, continued dialogue between actors in refugee education and the RTG to allow for Internet access in camps, protection of refugee rights and ending the imposed moratorium on refugee registrations.

The focus of the thesis now turns to the case studies on the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC), the ACU TBB academics and the ACU TBB refugee students. The following chapter (Chapter 6) explores the RTEC using social capital and CoP theory while the ACU TBB academics (Chapter 7) and ACU TBB refugee student cases are explored using social capital, CoP and blended learning theories. The three case studies are intended to illustrate the collective role and contribution of the praxis of these theories towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.

## **CHAPTER 6 – THE REFUGEE TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (RTEC)**

### ***6.1 Introduction***

This chapter presents Case Study 1: The Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC). The purpose of the chapter is to explore the genesis and evolution of the RTEC and examine the role of the committee as a catalyst for accredited refugee university education delivery on the TBB. Social capital and CoPs are utilised as theoretical lenses to examine relations between members of the RTEC and between the RTEC, ACU and collaborating partners involved in the ACU TBB programs and to determine the contribution of social capital and community of practice of the RTEC in the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB. By doing so, the chapter addresses Objectives 2 and 3 of this study (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2). The embedded design of Case Study 1 is shown in Table 8.

**Table 8: Embedded design of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC) case study.**

<b>CASE 1 THE REFUGEE TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (RTEC)</b>	
<b>CASE 1.1</b>	<b>Genesis and Evolution of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC)</b> <u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of the RTEC. <u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how the RTEC as a catalyst for advocating accredited higher education for refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises has contributed towards the attainment of higher education for refugees on the TBB.
<b>CASE 1.2</b>	<b>Social Capital of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC)</b> <u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of social capital within the committee and between the committee and collaborators. <u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how social capital within the RTEC and between the committee and collaborators has contributed towards the attainment of higher education for refugees on the TBB.
<b>CASE 1.3</b>	<b>The Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC) as a Community of Practice (CoP)</b> <u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of the RTEC as a community of practice advocating accredited higher education for refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises. <u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how the RTEC community of practice has contributed towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.

The chapter concludes by summarizing the role and contribution of the practical application (praxis) of social capital and community of practice of the RTEC towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.

## **6.2 Case 1.1 - Genesis and Evolution of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC)**

In the introduction to this thesis it was stated that the catalyst for the implementation of the first ACU TBB program, the ACU Karen Tertiary Education Pilot Project, was an informal request to ACU in 2001 by the Melbourne, Australia-based Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC) for ACU to consider delivering higher education courses to refugees residing in camps along the TBB. It is prudent at this stage of the thesis to now elaborate on the genesis and evolution of the committee,

to understand the role and function it has played in the TBB programs and postulate on what the future may hold for the committee.

The RTEC is a grassroots refugee education advocacy organisation based in Melbourne, Australia and made up of a group of individuals with a passion for providing refugees in protracted forced migration crises with access to accredited higher education. Members of the RTEC have come together with a specific aim: to facilitate access to higher education to refugees living in camps dotted along the TBB. Responding to a request by refugees on the TBB for help in providing higher learning, the committee has been working since the year 2000 to meet this need (MacLaren, 2008b; RTEC, 2008).

Anecdotally, the genesis of the RTEC followed the idiom '*from little things, big things grow*'. On returning from a study tour of the TBB in 2000 to Melbourne's Campion Centre of Ignatian Spirituality where he gave retreats, and worked as a pastoral counsellor and spiritual director, Jesuit Fr. Michael Smith discussed his journey through the TBB camps with friend and ACU academic Dr. Marie Joyce. Fr. Smith asked Dr. Joyce what could be done to facilitate access to higher education for the bright young minds he had encountered on his travels along the TBB. Dr. Joyce responded with words to the effect of, "*I'm not sure but let's get some people together and see what we can do*". The rest is *history!*

The RTEC is convened by Fr. Michael Smith SJ and is composed of representatives from ACU and OUA and individuals with academic and/ or industry experience in the fields of technology, education and social work. The committee meets on a regular basis (approximately every 6 weeks) for dinner and round-table discussions. This event was previously held at the Jesuit Theological College (JTC),

located in the inner-northern Melbourne suburb of Parkville but now held at the Campion Centre of Ignatian Spirituality in the East-Melbourne suburb of Kew. Each meeting is characterised by an introductory prayer and meditation, a set agenda, the tabling of correspondence which has been received by the convenor or any other member of the committee since the previous gathering, and the opportunity at the end of the meeting for members to share their reflections on the meeting and/ or any issue relating to the work of the committee. Regardless of any overt religious aspects to the protocol of committee meetings, the committee members come from both faith and secular backgrounds. The convenor of the committee, Fr Smith indicated the inclusion of prayer and discernment processes into the RTEC meetings are suitable as he believes these processes are somehow universal and not just the domain of the church or spiritual groups...

...These processes are applicable right across the board. There are people on our committee who are not believers or Christians or anything like that, like [name not shown] would be one, but [gender not shown] loves the prayer and is fully engaged in the prayer and the discernment so it is fascinating [Interview Transcript].

As host venue of each meeting, the JTC covers the cost of providing dinner meals to members of the committee. Other funds are raised by the committee through public and private donations. The committee has created professionally printed information pamphlets/ donation forms which are available for distribution by the convenor or other members at speaking engagements such as conference presentations. The donation form is also available from the committee's website.

The main method of communication between committee members is e-mail. Member contact details such as telephone, email and the institution to which members

belong to or represent are collected and updated at least annually by the convenor. The e-mail contact group of all members and associates is available to all members for efficient dissemination of information. Other methods of communication used by the committee include telephone calls and Skype voice and video calls.

Of the approximately nineteen current members of the RTEC, six participated in this study as members of the RTEC participant group, one as a member of the ACU academic participant group, one as a member of the refugee student participant group and one as a member of the Policy-makers and Practitioner participant group. Of the six RTEC participants, four indicated they have been members of the committee since its inception, another member for a period of five years and another for a period of 3 years. Participants indicated they became members of the RTEC through a combination of informal and formal networks. Informal network examples included prospective members of the RTEC meeting current members at social justice events (such as Amnesty International dinners or functions run by the Jesuit religious order). Formal network examples included prospective members of the RTEC working for ACU and being asked by the RTEC or by ACU management to become involved as an ACU representative on the committee. Apart from the role of convenor, a single respondent indicated that they had a defined role on the committee; that of minute taker. This illustrates that the committee has a horizontal organisational structure where the management of work are performed by teams rather than individuals. In such cases, the processes of evolution, decision making, and resource allocation shift toward continuous performance improvement (Ostroff & Smith, 1992).

Since the inception of the Karen Tertiary Education Pilot Project and through subsequent project deliveries, the RTEC has championed and brokered involvement by ACU, OUA and Jesuit universities in providing higher education to refugees on the

TBB. All respondents of the RTEC member participant group firmly believed the work of the RTEC is in championing higher education for refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crisis. When asked to describe the purpose of the RTEC, members indicated that they see the purpose of the RTEC as centring on two aspects: as facilitator and advocator. Respondents indicated that they believed the RTEC facilitates communication and sharing of ideas among the different institutions involved in the TBB programs and to people interested in refugee education. Respondents also indicated that they believe the committee facilitates the delivery of higher education to Burmese refugees in Thailand. As one member of the RTEC participant group noted...

...Initially, [the purpose of the RTEC was] to explore ways tertiary education could be provided to refugees on the Thai-Burma border and then to develop partnerships to provide the education [C2].

Several defining words were used by participants in describing the purpose of the committee. Terms such as *facilitator*, *advocate* and *broker* were common responses. As an advocate for refugees and the need for refugee higher education on the TBB and in other locations of protracted forced migration crises, one participant believed the RTEC's purpose is in encouraging universities to offer tuition-free higher education to camp based refugees and to support and encourage the universities in their work by exchanging information gained from lessons learned by the committee over the course of the committee's lifetime...

...[The RTEC] acts as an advocate for the needs of refugees to receive tertiary education. It also acts as a forum for the exchange of knowledge and best practice in the field of delivery of tertiary education to refugees [C1].

From the initial exploration of delivering higher education to refugees on the TBB the RTEC has always envisaged developing a sustainable model for the delivery of higher education to refugees in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises. A committee member expanded on the theme of the committee's vision of universal in situ refugee higher education by indicating they believed the purpose of the RTEC was to follow through with...

...coordination and driving the mission to bring tertiary education to the TBB as a model for other refugee programs eventually [C5].

A majority of members (4 out of 6 participants) of the committee indicated they had visited the TBB to observe the ACU programs, to teach and tutor in the programs and to provide support to the refugee students during the Diploma in Business and Certificate in Theology programs (including participating in the program graduation ceremonies) and during the course work phase of the Diploma in Liberal Studies program. The length of stay on the TBB for RTEC participants was brief, generally, 3-5 days, although one participant indicated they had visited the TBB at least 10 times and during one of those visits lived on the TBB for a period of six months. It should be noted that of those 10 visits not all were specifically to do with the ACU TBB programs.

When members of the RTEC participant group were asked to describe their impressions of the level of enthusiasm shown by the refugee students participating in the ACU TBB programs, several positive responses were given:

...I have only had email contact with them but they seem very enthusiastic, very motivated and very hard working [C1].

...Highly motivated and grateful for the opportunity [C2].

...The students were very enthusiastic though the working students experienced a lot of difficulty fitting in their studies [C3].

...Highly enthusiastic and very committed [C4].

...Fun, political (once they were all heading off to celebrate a Karen festival). Also, the usual frustrations of study, especially with foreign concepts [C7].

For many of the ACU refugee students (the recipients of the transitioned RTEC vision of providing higher education to refugees in protracted forced migration crises) the RTEC is a mythical-type entity. The refugee student's awareness of the RTEC and the committee's association to the ACU education programs on the TBB is best described by one refugee student participant...

...Yes I have heard of them from this education but I don't know exactly what they are [R5].

Generally, the refugee students first become aware of the RTEC during ACU TBB program induction sessions given by the ACU Coordinator of the TBB programs. In due course, students may also get to know more about the committee from RTEC members themselves when they visit the refugee students on the TBB to teach, tutor and provide support. This process of awareness-through-association leads into a discussion of social capital and the network of relations which have enabled the ACU TBB programs to occur.

### ***6.3 Case 1.2 - Social Capital of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC)***

Social capital was described in Chapter 3, Section 3.2 of this thesis as the...

...connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them (Putnam, 2000, p. 19)...

...where these connections...

...enable participants to act more effectively to pursue shared objectives (pp. 664-665) and have an effect on the productivity of the community or features of social organisation, such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (pp. 1-2).

It was also noted that Putnam's (2000) description of social capital was preferred for this study as it set out the *context* (individuals, community or organisation), *aspect* (networks, norms and trust), *process* (facilitating coordination and cooperation) and *outcome* (mutual benefit) of the concept of social capital.

### 6.3.1 Trust and the RTEC

As was shown in Chapter 3, Section 3.1.2.1, Trust is a vital dimension of social capital. Members of the RTEC participant group were asked if they believed trust to be important in relationships between members of the committee. All respondents indicated trust to be an important characteristic. On a scale of 1 to 3 where 1 = very important, 2 = important and 3 = not important, 4 respondents indicated that trust was *Very Important* and 2 respondents indicated that trust was *Important*. These findings in themselves are not surprising. The committee is a relatively small, tight-knit group which has evolved through the networking of like-minded individuals. When asked to explain why they believed trust in relationships between RTEC members and between the RTEC and collaborators had the level of stated importance one member of the RTEC participant group indicated...

...You have to be able to discuss the issues and problems and trust that others will not misuse that information [C4].

This response also highlights the sensitive nature of information discussed during committee meetings and the fact that not all committee members are representatives from ACU or OUA. When funding of existing programs or design issues of intended programs are discussed during committee meetings there is a perceived level of sufficient trust to enable tabling of sensitive issues in the security that the information will not be misused by an individual or organisation. Another participant added...

...There is a lot at stake for the providers and the recipients and all participants need to trust the integrity and motivation of all other participants to ensure that it doesn't become a political, point-scoring game [C2].

In such a close-knit group of like-minded individuals, the integrity and motivation of committee members, old and new, becomes evident quite quickly through actions. As one committee member indicated...

...without trust there could be no sharing of the vision and collaboration in developing programs [C6].

The mention of the term ‘vision’ by the committee member is significant. It is the opportunity to share in the vision of the committee which attracts new members. This item will be explored further in this chapter’s discussion on the RTEC as a CoP. Along with sharing in the committee’s vision is the act of making a commitment to fellow committee members, the organisations they represent and for non-aligned members, interpretation of a shared vision. The role and function of trust in this situation was described by a committee member as enabling...

...a shared commitment to achieve the goal and respect what each partner can do to achieve the goal [C3].

This shows that there is trust by members in allowing partners to share in the committee's core vision and not restrict partners in how they translate the combined vision into their own specific reality. For example, OUA and American-based Jesuit universities now deliver higher education to refugees on the TBB using their own infrastructure, courses/ programs and personnel. The committee places trust in these organisations as operational actors to translate the vision of refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises being provided access to accredited higher education. The organisations repay the trust placed in them by the committee each time they successfully complete a program of education delivery and witness the graduation of another refugee student cohort on the TBB.

The horizontal organisational structure and transparency of actions of the committee are in themselves enablers of trust. The committee is proud of its professional and ethical conduct in building partnerships with operational actors in refugee education and the committee's input towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB. For example, one committee member described how the...

...RTEC has no formal organisation structure, no constitution and very few physical assets. Therefore, when dealing with other organisations it is very clear that we have no other agenda and are solely focused on our stated goals. By demonstrating a high level of competency and willingness to extend well judged trust we are readily able to develop effective relationships where there is a seeming asymmetry in the power relationships [C4].

In order to fully understand how the trust component of social capital worked with the RTEC and between the RTEC and its partners, members of the committee were asked if they could provide examples of how trust has facilitated the work of the RTEC? Some participants raised implied trust issues such as openness and ethical conduct while others gave concrete examples of collaboration projects between RTEC and ACU as examples of how trust has facilitated the work of the committee. One committee member mentioned...

...Risk management is an important issue, to get input from others on the risks, while keeping trust that the issue would be kept confidential [C4].

This comment shows how it has been necessary for the committee to take a ‘leap of faith’ on many issues when approaching and working with partners on projects. The comment also highlights the association between trust, faith and risk management. Without trust there would be less willingness on behalf of the committee to take the leap of faith and issues dealing with partners would probably deal with risk mitigation rather than risk management. The willingness of partners such as ACU to ‘put their money where their mouth is’ has also been influenced by the formation of trust between the committee and ACU... One RTEC member described how...

...ACU has trusted the objectives and advice of RTEC in committing funds and human resources. Without this trust, nothing could have happened [C5].

This comment illustrates the strong relationship which has formed between the RTEC and ACU during the course of three education program deliveries on the TBB. The comment by the participant also shows how significant the trust dimension of social capital has been in enabling a small grassroots refugee education advocacy organisation which is committed to openness, transparency and ethical conduct to have

their vision of in situ refugee higher education transitioned to reality by an operational actor such as ACU.

One committee member indicated that they believed the core dimension in developing these relationships has been trust...

...Different universities have had trust in the commitment and ethics of RTEC and have been prepared to contribute significant resources [C3].

While it is easy to focus on trust of the RTEC at the entity level, one committee member indicated that it is also important not to lose sight of the relationships between the individual committee members which have given the committee its structure. The committee member described how...

...People openly share thoughts in meetings and ideas emerge and plans to put them into action [C7].

This response supports Goddard's (2003) claim that for individuals participating in relationships where there is a high level of social trust, there is most likely open exchange of information and individuals will act with caring and benevolence towards one another compared to individuals in relationships lacking trust.

In summary, one committee member described the manifestation of trust within the evolving RTEC as...

...Improving communication, enabling creativity, even if you don't fully know or trust everyone, as long as there is a quantum mass of trusting people [C5].

### 6.3.2 *Categorising the Social Capital of the RTEC*

This section of the chapter looks at determining the approach and type of social capital of the RTEC. The approach of social capital, whether *Relational*,

*Collective* or *Generalized* is achieved by exploring the social capital of the committee from the perspectives of level of manifestation, dimensions emphasized, core processes, utility and fungibility across domains (Brunie, 2009). The type of social capital is characterised as being bonding, bridging or linking social capital according to Woolcock's (2001) description of each type.

#### *6.3.2.1. Approach of social capital of the RTEC.*

Brunie's (2009) approaches to social capital comparative analysis framework begins with exploring the level of manifestation of social capital. The RTEC is by its very nature a small, relatively homogenous and exclusive group. Although the total number of members may increase at any one time, there has remained a core group of members since the earliest formation of the committee. Despite having faith-based and secular backgrounds the committee members share the common quality of a passion for refugee higher education. Many committee members are academics and a majority of members have visited the TBB in the capacity of teacher, tutor, committee representative or a combination of these.

The second component of Brunie's approaches to social capital comparative analysis framework looks at aspects of social life. The focus of relationships between individual committee members and between the committee and program partners is on the quality of the relationship rather than the number or extent of relationships. Relationships have been built on trust and the implied expectation of new members to be embraced into the committee due to the existing relationships between the inviter and invitee. For example, ‘outsiders’ were introduced to the committee by the core members through participating in social networking events such as Amnesty International fundraising dinners where like-minded souls, colleagues and acquaintances were in attendance. Potential members expectations of

the relationships within the RTEC were based on the quality of the relationship they had with the inviter.

The third component of Brunie's approaches to social capital comparative analysis framework looks at dimensions emphasized. The focus for the RTEC here is on access to resources which are required to transition the committee's vision of in situ refugee higher education to reality. The committee's resources include expertise in education administration, program planning and delivery which are held by individual members and the social networks between the committee and collaborating partners. The committee is not an educational organisation such as a college or university. It needs to access the resources held by these organisations and it achieves this through the network of relationships between individual committee members, the committee as a whole and program partners such as ACU and American-based Jesuit universities. The resources of the RTEC are embedded in these personal networks. Access to these essential resources is provided through these relationships. The resources of the RTEC are initially embedded in the individual members before they tend to be viewed as part of the collective committee.

The fourth component in Brunie's approaches to social capital comparative analysis framework is concerned with core processes. These core processes are factors/ dimensions which facilitate social capital. The RTEC is characterised by mutual trust, norms of reciprocity and networks. The importance of trust within the committee and between the committee and collaborating partners has been documented in responses by members of the RTEC participant group. There is both a demonstrated and expected (thick) high-level trust in the actions of individual members of the committee and in the network of relations between the committee

and collaborating partners. Examples of norms of reciprocity were also provided by members of the RTEC participant group. There is an understanding by the RTEC as a whole that any request by the committee to ACU, for example, to provide a certain number of tuition free places in future refugee education programs on the TBB is dependent on ACU being able to provide the requested level of financial, personnel and logistic support necessary for any such program. There needs to be give and take between the committee and ACU or other operational actors of the committee's vision.

The fifth component of Brunie's approaches to social capital comparative analysis framework is utility. As a group of individuals who have come together to form a committee, the RTEC conducts itself by engaging in group-specific activity. It is doubtful if any committee member could individually achieve similar outcomes of transitioning a vision of refugee higher education to reality with an operational actor such as ACU. Perhaps the best way forward would be if the individual was a member of ACU due to the intrinsic structure of relations in such a relationship. The utility of the RTEC has been achieved through the power of collective action with associated individual benefits ranging from reinvigorated careers of the teachers involved in the TBB programs who have indicated they feel used for a purpose<sup>36</sup> to the ability to participate in social justice to increased cultural awareness.

The final component of Brunie's approaches to social capital comparative analysis framework is fungibility across domains. The reader is reminded that fungibility refers to exchangeability: the quality of being capable of exchange or

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<sup>36</sup> This comment relates to Shaw's quote "This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy (Shaw, 1903, p. 15).

interchange. The social capital of the RTEC is specific to the phenomenon of refugee higher education in locations of protracted forced migration crises. The fungibility of the social capital of the RTEC is therefore limited by the use of the committee's resources which have been formed through individual and collective participation in the social networks between committee members and between the committee and collaborating partners. These resources are context specific to the attainment of higher education by refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises.

Based on analysis using Brunie's approaches to social capital comparative analysis framework, it can be seen the approach to social capital of the RTEC does not fit into distinct single category of approach. Rather, the approach is a hybrid of *collective* for level of manifestation, aspects of social life, core processes and utility and *relational* for dimensions emphasized and fungibility across domains. The approach to social capital of the RTEC is summarised in Table 9.

**Table 9: Approach to Social Capital of the RTEC**

Component	Relational Approach	Collective Approach	Generalized Approach
Level of manifestation		*	
Aspects of social life		*	
Dimensions emphasized	*		
Core processes		*	
Utility		*	
Fungibility across domains	*		

#### 6.3.2.2. Type of social capital of the RTEC.

The RTEC exhibits characteristics of *bonding*, *bridging* and *linking* types of social capital. Bonding social capital of the RTEC is evident in the relations of the committee who are similar to that of close friends rather than being relations

between family and neighbours. Several members of the committee consider other members to be close friends through association with their work in the committee. The RTEC exhibits strong characteristics of bridging social capital whereby the relations of the committee exist between associates and colleagues. This statement describes the core relational structure of the committee. Overall, the outcome of being a committee member is the formation of associate or collegial relations with other committee members. Some members of the committee are also colleagues at ACU. Linking social capital of the committee is exhibited in the relations between the committee and sympathetic individuals in positions of power. For example the Vice Chancellor of ACU and representatives of NGOs and religious orders working with refugees on the TBB would meet the criteria as being individuals in positions of power as they have the decision making ability to respond to requests by the RTEC to operational actors such as ACU for required support of refugee education programs on the TBB.

The previous sections of this chapter have illustrated how the practical application of social capital of the RTEC has manifested itself in various ways in the attainment of higher education for refugees on the TBB. The RTEC would not have evolved to its present form without trust and reciprocity; the core social capital dimensions which have developed as part of the social networks of individual committee members and the committee itself. These social networks have enriched and rejuvenated the committee by providing avenues for like-minded individuals to join and participate in the work of the committee over the course of the committee's lifespan. The networks have also allowed the committee to overcome its lack of educational resources by engaging with operational actors, initially with ACU and subsequently with OUA and partner universities.

The most significant contribution of the social capital of the RTEC however is the ability to utilise its social networks to ultimately transition the committee's vision of bringing in situ higher education opportunities to refugees in protracted forced migration crises to reality. Without the gradual accumulation of social capital within the RTEC this would not have been possible. The attention of this chapter now turns to Case 1.3 which explores the RTEC as a CoP.

#### ***6.4 Case 1.3 - The Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC) as a Community of Practice (CoP)***

A CoP was defined in Chapter 3, Section 3.2 of this study as...

...a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Wenger, 2008, p. 1).

The first step in exploring the RTEC as a CoP was to ascertain if the members of the committee were aware of the term 'community of practice'. Six out of seven respondents from the RTEC member participant group indicated that they were aware of the term. This finding was unsurprising as several committee members are academics in the education and information technology (IT) fields where the theory of legitimate peripheral participation and communities of practice is centred. Based on Wenger's (1998) definition of a CoP, members of the RTEC were then asked if they considered the committee in effect to be a CoP. All committee members indicated that they did consider the RTEC to be a CoP.

#### *6.4.1 A Shared Passion or Concern*

Members of the committee indicated that they did indeed share a passion or concern about the opportunity to provide refugees on the TBB with access to accredited higher education and that the history of the committee's evolution from 2000 to the present day certainly showed how they had learnt lesson from each stage of their development in engaging with the ACU, renewing the committee by bringing in new members, seeing the outcome of a series of refugee student cohorts graduating from the Diploma in Business, Certificate in Theology and (at the time of writing this chapter) the Diploma in Liberal Studies TBB programs. The committee had reached the stage where now they were exploring how to formally document their structure so that replication of their in situ TBB refugee higher education advocacy model could be adopted in other locations of protracted forced migration crises.

As the review of literature on communities of practice indicated, being able to contribute to the community is an important feature of effective CoPs. All seven RTEC member participants believed that the members of the RTEC understood the committee well enough to be able to contribute effectively to the committee. However, one respondent indicated that the process of getting to the stage of actually being able to understand the committee at an adequate level to then contribute effectively to it was not a quick or instant process...

...I think mostly they [Committee members] do understand it but it does take some getting used to and I found it difficult to understand at first [C5].

Another committee member participant indicated that they thought that the convenor and long-standing members of the RTEC were central to bringing new committee members ‘up-to-speed’ ...

...I think Michael Smith addresses this when he orientates new members

[C3].

This response links back to a key indicator of CoPs where there are a core group of members who Wenger (2002) indicates take on leadership roles and become auxiliaries to the community ‘coordinator’. This response also indicates an implied belief that there is an awareness for the convenor, if not the whole committee, to work towards making new members welcome, and describing the role and functions of the committee and expressing the vision, aims and objectives of the RTEC to all new members. This process is understood by all members as the most effective way of enabling the new committee member to reach the stage where they have the ability and feel comfortable enough to contribute effectively to the RTEC. This process is the praxis of communities of practice for the RTEC.

#### *6.4.2 Mutual Engagement*

Another important feature of effective communities of practice identified in the review of literature was the concept of engagement with the committee by members. All RTEC members indicated they felt they were able to engage (interact) and be trusted as a partner in any engagement within the committee. Committee members have several channels of engagement available to them. For example, a small number of core committee members meet face-to-face on a regular basis as part of committee meetings. The participants at such meetings invariably include representatives from the ACU and OUA. Members of the committee who are not

based in Melbourne, Australia are also informed of what takes place in the meetings by the distribution of official minutes as well as meeting agenda items, supporting documents such as reports on visits to the ACU TBB programs by committee members and other assorted correspondence such as requests by educators in other locations of protracted forced migration crises to know more about the ACU TBB programs or seeking guidance in how to replicate the ACU TBB model.

#### *6.4.3 Shared Repertoire*

Another characteristic of members of a CoP is that they have a shared repertoire such as having a shared language, routines, stories and styles. When the members of the RTEC participant group were asked if they considered there to be a shared repertoire amongst members of the committee, six out of seven participants indicated that they felt there was a shared a repertoire of the committee. Examples of this shared repertoire were varied and included:

...The language of 'the border', the camps', 'the NGOs', 'on-the-ground-tutors'; stories of visits to the border; stories from the students...are all shared and mutually understood [C4].

...a shared meal before meetings; Prayer at the beginning of meetings; evaluation at the end [C2].

These shared repertoires show that there is a common understanding among the members and that the process of gaining of knowledge and insights about how the committee operates can occur through a variety of means ranging from a chat across the table at a pre-meeting dinner or through collaboration on upcoming publications involving the work of the committee.

When members of the RTEC were questioned further to determine how important it is to the effective working of the RTEC that members be given access to any shared repertoire, five respondents indicated that it was ‘Very Important’ and two respondents indicated ‘Important’.

The self-assessment of the RTEC as a CoP by the committee members is in alignment with the observations, understanding and insights gathered by the researcher in the course of being a committee member since 2006. The researcher postulated that the RTEC was a CoP and this presumption has been validated by the RTEC exhibiting signs of a shared passion for what they do, a mutual engagement and a shared repertoire. Without a model or framework to follow for transitioning the committee’s vision of in situ higher education for refugees in a location of protracted forced migration crisis, the committee has learned what and how to achieve this transition by meeting regularly, evolving through the introduction of new members and an iterative approach to improving on what has previously transpired in collaborations with the ACU. In this sense, the RTEC has been a self-reproducing, emergent and evolving entity as suggested by Schlager and Fusco (2003).

## ***6.5 Discussion***

In Chapter 3, Section 3.1.4, it was noted that distinguishing between bonding, bridging and linking types of social capital is important in understanding the plight of the poor (or, as was suggested by the author, refugees in this study) as such groups have a close-knit and extensive stock of bonding social capital, a modest endowment of bridging social capital and almost no linking social capital enabling them to gain sustained access to formal institutions (Woolcock, 2001). This suggests an opportunity for less formal organisations (such as the RTEC) to foster sustained formal access to

accredited higher education for refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises.

*6.5.1 Significance of Involvement with RTEC and Contributing Towards the Attainment of Higher Education by Refugees on the TBB*

Members of the RTEC participant group were asked to describe how significant being involved in delivering higher learning to refugees on the Border been to them. One respondent described how invigorating RTEC meetings can be and how metaphorically it is winning the little battles that help win the war...

...There is no mistaking the passion of the group. You come away from a meeting feeling a renewed energy [C3].

Another member of the RTEC who works for ACU described the pride in being able to participate in a program supported by their employer and how working with the committee has opened the respondent's eyes to the plight of refugees...

...It is wonderful to have the opportunity to be involved in a meaningful project as part of one's paid work [C2].

The committee has also been a conduit for members seeking ways in which to transition their skills as they near the end of their full-time working life. One committee members described how...

...it has been and is a very important part of my life. It is one of two major commitments I have in this near-retirement phase of life [C4].

Finally, a committee member summed up the feelings expressed by their fellow committee members by indicating how being involved with the RTEC has...

...been a transformative experience for me [C5].

## **6.6 Conclusion**

This chapter presented Case 1: The Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC). The case explored the genesis and evolution of the RTEC, the social relations amongst members of the committee and between the committee and collaborating partners and determined how the committee functions as a CoP. The core social capital elements of trust and reciprocity were discussed and the approach and type of social capital of the RTEC was described. Generally the approach to social capital of the RTEC was a hybrid of relational and collective approaches and the type of social capital for the RTEC incorporated aspects of each type; bonding, bridging and linking.

This chapter has shown that there are CoP elements of sharing a passion or common concern, mutual engagement and shared repertoires for the RTEC. Generally, the committee members who had experience working in small groups, putting plans into action, analysing what areas needed to be improved and identifying lessons learned iteratively were those which readily identified with the core components of a CoP and as such, all agreed that in their perceptions the RTEC was indeed a functioning CoP. The focus of the thesis now turns to Case Study 2: The ACU TBB academics.

# CHAPTER 7 – THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

## THAI-BURMA BORDER ACADEMICS

### 7.1 *Introduction*

This chapter presents Case Study 2: The Australian Catholic University Thai-Burma Border Academics. Social capital, CoPs and blended learning are utilised as theoretical lenses to determine the role and contribution of each in the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB from the perspective of the ACU TBB academics. By doing so, the chapter addresses Objectives 2, 3 and 4 of this study (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2). The embedded structure of Case Study 2 is shown in Table 10.

**Table 10: Embedded design of the ACU TBB Academics case study**

<b>CASE 2 THE ACU TBB ACADEMICS</b>	
<b>CASE 2.1</b>	<p><b>Social Capital of the ACU TBB Academics</b></p> <p><u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of social capital amongst academics involved in the ACU TBB programs.</p> <p><u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how social capital amongst the ACU TBB academics has contributed towards the attainment of university education for refugees on the TBB.</p>
<b>CASE 2.2</b>	<p><b>The ACU academics as a Community of Practice (CoP)</b></p> <p><u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of the ACU TBB academics as a community of practice of teachers.</p> <p><u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how the ACU TBB academic community of practice has contributed towards the attainment of higher education for refugees on the TBB.</p>
<b>CASE 2.3</b>	<p><b>Blended Learning and the ACU TBB academics</b></p> <p><u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of the use of blended learning by academics involved in the ACU TBB programs.</p> <p><u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how the use of blended learning by academics in the ACU TBB programs has contributed towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.</p>

## **7.2 Case 2.1 - Social Capital of the ACU TBB Academics**

Case 2.1 explores the social capital of the ACU academics involved in the TBB programs. The descriptive analysis which follows is similar in structure to Case 1.2 in Chapter 6. Firstly, the core social capital dimension of trust is explored through online questionnaire responses by the ACU TBB academics. Secondly, Brunie's (2009) approaches to social capital comparative analysis framework is used to determine the approach of social capital of the ACU TBB academics and Woolcock's (2001) categorisation of bonding, bridging and linking types of social capital is used to determine the type of social capital of the ACU academics.

The ACU TBB academic participant group was comprised of 1 teacher and 2 on-ground tutors. The teacher, based at ACU's Mackillop campus in North Sydney had conducted 5 subject units in the Diploma in Business program and visited the TBB on 3 occasions. The teacher became involved in the ACU TBB programs whilst employed by ACU. The teacher described how he...

...joined the program to conduct the first units in 2004...and helped to select the first intake of students on site in the camps [A3].

Of the 2 tutors, 1 had studied at Doctoral level with ACU in the field of Theology and delivered a number of subjects units in the ACU TBB Certificate in Theology program. The tutor had visited the TBB on 2 occasions in his role as on-ground tutor. The tutor described how he became involved in the ACU TBB Certificate in Theology program on the TBB as follows...

...I was suggested as a tutor to one of the ACU Border programs by a kindred spirit [A3].

This comment by the tutor reinforces the notion that network connections and social relationships have been instrumental in enabling the ACU TBB programs to occur.

The current on-ground tutor was recruited by ACU to provide full-time tutorial and academic support to the refugee students as well as perform the de facto role of overseer. The tutor had been with the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort from the beginning of their program. The remote location of the ACU study centre (outside of Australia) and more so the issue of the refugee students not only studying but also living permanently at the ACU TBB study centre for the duration of their program has necessitated the fulltime on-ground tutor role. The tutor described how he became involved in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program through his association with PALMS, an Australian iNGO. The tutor indicated...

...I've been involved with PALMS, the organisation which initiated this [position as ACU on-ground tutor] for me. I've been involved with them [PALMS] now for 15 years. I've served as a volunteer in India, Nepal, Tibet and Vietnam [A1].

Once again, the way in which the tutor was introduced to the ACU TBB programs is through a network connection or social relationship. The coordinator of the ACU TBB programs contacted PALMS seeking a person to work as the on-ground tutor for the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies. The on-ground tutor became part of the ACU TBB program network after working with PALMS in a number of countries over a number of years. The network connections, social relationships and the trust, developed over the many placements the on-ground tutor had worked on with PALMS eventuated in the on-ground tutor taking up his current role with the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program. The aspect of trust which has facilitated the

involvement of each of the ACU academics in the ACU TBB programs and the resultant social capital will now be explored further.

### 7.2.1 Trust and the ACU Academics

The process of exploring the social capital of the ACU academics began by establishing if the academics felt trust was important in relationships between themselves and between the academics and the refugee students? All members of the ACU academic participant group agreed that trust was *very important*. Several examples were provided by the participants which explained why trust in the relationships between the students and the academics had this level of significance. The teacher who delivered subjects in the ACU TBB Diploma in Business program described the trust between the ACU academics as follows...

...When I was there the tutors were almost working for nothing. As were ACU staff. When we left we had to place our trust in the tutors. This was well placed as it turned out [A3].

The teacher then described the way in which trust was developed between the refugee students and the ACU academics...

...The students had seen terrible things in their lives and trust was something we had to work on. But they were very willing to place trust in us after we had all met and spent time with them [A3].

The tutor of the ACU TBB Certificate in Theology program described how the experiences of being refugees on the one hand and the perceptions of conventional ‘authoritarian’ type relationships between teacher and student which the refugee students had been accustomed to in Burma on the other were slowly changed to relationships of support and guidance based on trust over time...

...The refugee context (which comprises of loss and in many instances even in the theft of identity itself), necessitates high levels of -trust- in these particular types of (authority) relationships to create an atmosphere of safety, security and respect where the student can feel free and secure to move comfortably and to freely express him/herself [A2].

The on-ground tutor for the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program indicated that he believed trust was critical in each of the relationships forged in the program between tutor and students and students and students. The tutor described how the ACU TBB program was built on a foundation of trust and transparency and how the refugee students would ‘see straight through’ the motives of the ACU and the academics that taught the TBB programs if trust didn’t exist...

...I can only say that if they [the ACU refugee students] didn’t feel that the people who were coming over to this country to actually spend time with them to teach, if they didn’t believe and trust that these people were well qualified, knew what they were talking about, then the whole thing would just fall in a heap [A3].

Other examples of how trust facilitated the work of course coordinators, teachers and tutors who delivered the ACU TBB programs and between these academics/ coordinators and the refugee students were also offered by the ACU academic participants...

...The students had not been able to trust adults for most of their lives. Without us going on site the trust we needed would not have happened. Playing soccer with them in the camps is one example that helped [A3].

This statement illustrates how important it was for the development of trust that face-to-face teaching was incorporated into the ACU TBB model. The teacher believes that

it would have been more difficult, if not impossible, to develop the same levels of trust without showing the refugee students that the academics were prepared to travel to the refugee students, to witness first-hand the conditions in which the refugee students live and to share in their daily activities.

All ACU academic participants agreed that trust between the students and the academics developed over time. The teacher involved in the ACU TBB Diploma in Business program commented...

...The students grew dramatically over the three years. By the time we finished up, emails were flowing from them to us almost on a daily basis.

We still get emails from those who finished in 2006 [A3].

The tutor for the ACU TBB Certificate in Theology program noted how there was a growing willingness to contribute and participate in classroom activities over the course of the program as trust slowly developed. The tutor described how...

...Students were willing to contribute in class and each day an increased enthusiasm was in evidence. Something which the instructor should attempt to connect to -HOPE-, for ultimately this is what these programs are all about [A2].

This statement by the tutor also raises the issue of how the development of trust lead to raised levels of optimism and hope. The ACU TBB Certificate in Theology was conducted in an atmosphere of hope, where involvement in the program was a positive, affirming process, something which the teachers, tutors and students were well aware of.

The on-ground tutor for the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program indicated “Absolutely...” when asked if trust had developed over time. The tutor added that...

...They [the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee students] had to wait to see what I was about before they could actually say “yeah this guy is going to be around [A1].

This statement by the on-ground tutor on trust is also associated with the process of reciprocity between the tutor and the refugee students.

#### *7.2.2 Reciprocity and the ACU Academics*

Examples of reciprocity were provided by the teacher of the ACU TBB Diploma in Business program and the tutor of the ACU TBB Certificate in Theology program. In regards to the Diploma in Business program the teacher gave the example of how...

...We had to allow for the fact that the business units were very foreign to the students. They studied economics yet had never held money in their hands. We had to allow for this in the assessments and marking. In return we saw a huge increase in their understanding of the concept of money [A3].

This statement indicates the necessity to be aware of the backgrounds from which the refugee students are coming from. There can be no assumptions made by the teachers and tutors of the ACU TBB programs that the refugee students have as fluent language skills, academic skills or life experiences as those held by students which normally take the subjects and courses delivered by the academics in an Australian university-based setting. The refugee students in the ACU TBB programs do sit entrance tests in English to determine their academic capabilities and language skills. They also

participate in an interview with ACU's Coordinator of the TBB Programs and the on-ground tutor. The tutor acknowledged that his direct or forthright nature was an asset and the refugee students fully understood knew their position when they asked for assistance or consulted the tutor on all manner of subjects that came up as part of living and studying at the ACU study centre. The tutor commented...

...I say things as they are. I'm a typical Australian, I give and I take [A1].

The tutor of the ACU TBB Certificate in Theology program summed up the process of reciprocity between the academics and the refugee students where...

...You give the best of yourself, and in turn you are inspired with the enthusiasm and optimism of the students. This in itself is one of the great 'secrets' of teaching. Giving and taking can also mean the exchange of cultural beliefs, traditions and enrichment which travels both ways [A2].

The true nature of reciprocity is evident in the comments by the tutor and show that reciprocity in the ACU TBB programs was not just about the giving and taking of the refugee students. The reciprocity is equally relevant for the academics involved in the ACU TBB programs and occurs along the lines of the 18<sup>th</sup> century French moralist and essayist Joseph Joubert<sup>37</sup> who believed that *to teach is to learn twice*.

The actions of the tutors and teaching staff are influential in building trusting relationships with the refugee students. Discussion of the unique context in which the ACU academics and refugee students find themselves in on the TBB was repeated in many interviews. In this context the on-ground tutor of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program described one problematic scenario which arose during the delivery of the Diploma and how the existence of trust between the refugee students,

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<sup>37</sup> Joseph Joubert (1754-1824)

the leader of the refugee students and the on-ground tutor led to an effective resolution to the issue. The tutor indicated...

...Now in terms of trust if there was any sort of a problem that I perceived here it would only be the obvious one which exists when people have to live together and that is among themselves. Obviously there has been some animosity ill-feeling and this has been tricky. We've managed to alleviate part of it by nominating [Refugee student name suppressed] as a captain who has quite a lot of responsibility but he also feels he is able to come to me for advice. He will say, “[name of tutor suppressed], you know, I don't want to start ‘lording it up’ with these people but here's what the problems are” and then I am able to deal with those sorts of things [A1].

This statement shows how the tutor believes that trust issues are generally between the refugee students and are a result of the environment in which the refugee students find themselves in. Not only do the refugee students still need to deal with being a refugee but as participants in the ACU TBB programs they also need to focus on their study, deal with insecurity of being outside the sanctuary of the refugee camps along the TBB and virtual captives at the ACU study centre. This melting pot of issues has the potential to boil over at any time and therefore the trust shown and earned by the refugee students and ACU academics is vital in maintaining a safe, secure and effective living and studying environment. Peace-building and trust building exercises are used at the ACU TBB study centre and this is increasingly important as attempts are made to increase the diversity level among the selected refugee students.

### *7.2.3 Categorising the Social Capital of the ACU Academics*

This section of the chapter looks at determining the approach and type of social capital of the ACU academics. The process of categorisation is identical to the

process used for categorising the approach and type of social capital of the RTEC.

Descriptive analysis of the approach and type of social capital of the ACU academics is made by exploring Brunie's (2009) comparative analysis framework and Woolcock's (2001) three types of social capital.

#### *7.2.3.1. Approach of social capital of the ACU TBB academics.*

The total number of academics involved in the ACU TBB programs continues to grow as new subjects, courses and programs are delivered to new refugee student cohorts on the TBB. However, for this study at the time of data gathering the sample of ACU TBB academic participants was small and therefore the level of manifestation of social capital of the ACU TBB academics is characterised as being made up of a small, relatively homogenous and exclusive group. This suggests a collective approach to the social capital of the ACU TBB academics. On further analysis, if the way in which the academics were introduced to the ACU TBB programs is considered then the approach of social capital of the academics exhibits characteristics of the relational approach whereby the networks of individuals, groups and organisations are more significant. Therefore, in regards to the level of manifestation, the most appropriate description of the approach of social capital of the ACU TBB academics is as a hybrid approach of collective and relational social capital.

The social capital aspect of social life of the ACU TBB academics is consistent with that of the social capital of the RTEC members. Feedback from the RTEC members and ACU TBB academics indicates that the quality of the relationships among all involved in the ACU TBB programs is the defining characteristic of aspect of social life.

The social capital dimensions emphasized for the ACU TBB academics are characterised by the resources embedded in personal networks and the social relationships that provide access to these resources. The way in which the network connections and social relationships of the on-ground tutor for the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program led to the tutor becoming involved in the program is an example of these processes.

The core processes of the social capital of the ACU TBB academics are characterised as having thick mutual trust, norms of reciprocity and networks. Academics making an effort to visit the refugee students and share in their daily lives at the refugee camps on the TBB and at the ACU study centres, an awareness of the context in which the refugee students find themselves in, the unique study environment, unstable technology and logistics experienced in the in situ delivery of the ACU TBB programs and descriptions of how each academic became involved in the programs are all examples of trust, reciprocity and networks.

The utility of social capital of the ACU TBB academics is characterised by group-specific activity, for example teaching in a program of accredited higher education, delivered to a cohort of refugee students in a location of protracted forced migration crisis is generally only possible under a collective approach to social capital. Regardless of how devoted and committed an individual may be, it is highly unlikely an individual can accomplish what has been shown by ACU and their TBB programs as far as the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB is concerned. This is one reason why the ACU, OUA and partner universities are organisations which are currently delivering an in situ education delivery model of blended learning which takes *the mountain* as close to *Mohammed* as technically and legally as possible. The altruistic motives of the ACU TBB academics can also be

considered in exploring the utility of the social capital in this case. These academics made a conscious decision to offer their services to the ACU TBB programs as they believed that the provision of education to refugees is a worthy cause. The teacher in the ACU TBB Diploma in Business program, despite being employed by ACU, has also made a conscious decision to travel to the remote TBB, spending time away from family and friends and working with the refugee students at the ACU study centre under difficult environmental conditions because he sees the value of service and how the social good that binds society together can be accomplished by supporting the refugee students in the attempts to attain accredited higher education. Therefore, the utility of social capital of the ACU academics can be argued as consisting predominantly of a collective approach with a less significant aspect of generalized approach.

The fungibility across domains for the social capital of the ACU TBB academics is characterised by activities that require similar patterns of expectation and organisation. This is hardly surprising when the context of the location of education program delivery is considered. The social capital of the ACU TBB academics is not easily exchangeable or replicated in a conventional teaching or learning environment due to a plethora of reasons mentioned previously in Chapter 5. The academics are required to deal with not only teaching the refugee students and supporting them emotionally but must also have an open-mind to the conditions they find when arriving at the ACU study centre to deliver their unit of study, and must be prepared for adjustment to the foreign climate, food, language, customs and societal norms. The combination of these issues suggests that for the social capital of the ACU TBB academics to be fungible, the comparable circumstances need to include similar patterns of expectation and organisation to the TBB programs. One way in which this

is possible is if the academics were to participate in another program of accredited higher education delivered to refugees in a location of protracted forced migration crisis other than the TBB.

Based on analysis using Brunie's (2009) comparative framework, the social capital of the ACU TBB academics can be classified as a hybrid approach. The predominant approach is collective for aspects of level of manifestation, aspects of social life, core processes and utility; however the social capital of the ACU TBB academics also exhibits a relational approach to aspects of level of manifestation and dimensions emphasized and a generalized approach to the aspect of utility. The overall hybrid approach to social capital of the ACU TBB academics is summarised in Table 11.

**Table 11: Approach to Social Capital of the ACU Academics**

Component	Relational Approach	Collective Approach	Generalized Approach
Level of manifestation	*	*	
Aspects of social life		*	
Dimensions emphasized	*		
Core processes		*	
Utility		*	*
Fungibility across domains	*		

#### *7.2.3.2. Type of social capital of the ACU TBB academics.*

The type of social capital of the ACU academics involved in the ACU TBB programs is comprised predominantly of bridging social capital where relations are between the academics and their associates and colleagues. Examples of associates of ACU TBB academic participants in this study are Thai nationals and Thai-based Burmese on the TBB who assist with logistics of transporting refugees between the

ACU TBB study centre and the TBB refugee camps. An example of a colleague of ACU TBB academic participants in this study is another members of ACU who are involved in the TBB programs or general Australian-based ACU learning support staff who assist with technical help desk questions related to the Blackboard learning system. There are very limited examples where bonding social capital exists. For example, the relations between the tutor of the ACU TBB Certificate in Theology program and the RTEC committee member, described by the tutor as “a kindred spirit” are characteristic of bonding social capital – relations between close friends. However, bridging types of social capital are far more prevalent. One common example involves the relations between the on-ground tutor involved in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program and academics from several American-based Jesuit universities.

The bridging social capital of the ACU TBB academics is developed through trust, the process of reciprocity and a multitude of personal, seemingly inconsequential, but in hind-sight anything but, interactions between previous ACU TBB academics and academics venturing to the TBB for the first time to participate in the latest incarnation of unit or course being offered to the refugee student cohort. Apart from the initial ACU TBB Diploma in Business program where the ACU academics involved had no baseline knowledge or comprehension of the task and environment from which to begin their teaching odyssey or framework to follow for the delivery of in situ higher education to refugees in a location of protracted forced migration crisis, each new ACU participant in the TBB program has been fortunate to have the experiences of prior academics to draw on. The experiential learning by the initial ACU TBB academics of how to mechanically deliver units in a program of higher education to a cohort of refugees within the socio-political context of the

TBB, constrained by technical issues (for example access to inconsistent power and Internet), security issues (for example refugees spending extended lengths of time away from their refugee camp, friends and family) and general feelings of being ‘lost in translation’ of being away from home, familiar food and environments have been an invaluable resource for those academics involved in the ACU TBB Certificate in Theology and Diploma in Business programs. The experiential learning has been passed from ACU TBB program ‘old-timers’ to ‘new-timers’ in a number of ways such as the simple act of a pre-departure phone call or email where information is freely exchanged on which hotel or guest house for the academic to base their stay and other helpful transport, food and personal safety and security hints and tips. There is also a printed ‘Thai Burma Briefing’ document made available to program visitors to the Border. As the number of ACU academics involved in the TBB programs increases, the informal database of helpful information of hints and tips for survival by the ACU academics on the TBB continues to grow. Access to this information enables the ACU academics to focus on delivering the content of the specific unit which they teach within the condensed timeframe two week delivery timeframe.

The informal social network of the ACU TBB academics illustrates how some academics have more associates and colleagues to call upon for knowledge, advice and support. In theory, a ‘new-timer’ working in an ACU TBB program has connections to all other members, however, in reality an academic chooses to seek out those academics who they know or who are recommended to the ‘new-time’ by a trusted associate or colleague. Regardless of the number of social connections consulted prior to departure for the TBB, the practical application of social capital can be seen to play an important, facilitating role in the attainment of higher

education by refugees on the TBB. Social capital of the ACU TBB academics provides ‘new-timers’ with a sense of security and preparedness by learning from those who have gone before them. In this way the act of information sharing overcomes the drawback of approaching such a situation alone for as Hanifan (1916) stated...

...The individual is helpless socially, if left to himself...(p. 130).

The ACU TBB academic program ‘new-timers’ are open to accepting the knowledge passed to them by the ‘old-timers’ through the implicit trust developed over time between associates and colleagues, knowing that delivering higher education to refugees in a location of protracted forced migration crisis is not an easy or simple process, and that each academic who contributes their time, skill and passion to the greater good does so out of a desire to see education delivered to the bright young minds of a select few refugees along the TBB.

### **7.3 Case 2.2 - The ACU TBB Academics as a Community of Practice**

#### **(CoP)**

Case 2.2 explores the participation of the ACU academics in the ACU TBB programs from the perspective of a CoP. This case is *matter-of-factly* brief as the number of respondents, indicated in the data collection discussion in Chapter 4, was small. Similarly to Case 1.3, the first step in exploring the ACU TBB academics as a CoP was to discover if the academics were aware of the term ‘community of practice’. Two members of the ACU Academic participant group indicated that they were aware of this term and the remaining participant indicated that he was not aware of the term particularly but understood the concept once Wenger’s (1998) definition was provided.

These findings were unsurprising as the two participants who had indicated that they were aware of the term CoP had taught in the area of Informatics, Information Systems and similar fields where project management and teamwork dynamics are frequently discussed and practiced. The ACU academic participant who indicated that he was not aware of the term CoP did not have a similar background to his ACU TBB colleagues.

### *7.3.1 A Shared Passion or Concern*

The element of sharing a passion or common concern was again the most widely understood and forthright indication of how the ACU academics (similarly to the RTEC members in Chapter 6 and as will be shown in Chapter 8 for the refugee student cohort) envisaged themselves as being a CoP. The shared passion and concern for what they did was described by one ACU academic participant as follows:

...The 3 people on the first program became very passionate about the program as we became more involved with the students and better understood their plight. We would have worked free of charge if need be.

[A2].

### *7.3.2 Mutual Engagement*

In order to effectively deliver their subject or course in each ACU TBB program the ACU TBB academics found it essential to be engaged and able to interact with the ACU TBB program coordinator, fellow ACU TBB academics, ACU learning support personnel, members of the RTEC and in particular, the ACU TBB refugee student cohorts. Similarly to the responses by members of the RTEC, the ACU TBB academics indicated that it was essential that they be trusted as a partner in any engagement and this comment reinforces the significance of trust not only in any

discussion of social capital of the ACU TBB academics but also the linkage of the close-knit CoP and the formation of social capital within that CoP.

### *7.3.3 Shared Repertoire*

The ACU TBB academics were then asked if they considered there to be a shared repertoire such as having a shared language, routines, stories and styles amongst their colleagues who taught in the ACU TBB programs.

... Though such responses need to be invariably qualified, here I would say that the ‘shared repertoire’ revolved about our similar religious beliefs and convictions [A3].

This comment aligns well with the shared passions or common concerns held by the ACU TBB academics while participating in the ACU TBB programs. Another finding from exploring the ACU academics as a CoP is the notion that although the academics involved in the ACU TBB programs have come from different disciplinary backgrounds, they were working towards the same goals. This illustrates the advantages of participating in multidisciplinary and collaborative practice.

## **7.4 Case 2.3 - Blended Learning and the ACU TBB Academics**

Blended Learning was defined in Chapter 3, Section 3.4 of this study as...

...learning that is facilitated by the effective combination of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning, and founded on transparent communication amongst all parties involved with a course (Heinze & Procter, 2004, p. 10).

The purpose of the following section of this chapter is to address Objective 4 of this study by understanding how the practical application of blended learning by the ACU

academics involved in the TBB programs has contributed to the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.

Over the course of the three ACU TBB programs, a small number of ACU lecturers and tutors have visited the ACU TBB study centres to deliver intensive bursts of F2F teaching and supplemented this action by online learning when they returned to their Australian campuses. Of the ACU academic participants, one indicated that he was recently retired but continued to hold a honorary position with ACU, one no longer has any ongoing association with ACU and the other participant is still employed by ACU. Some of the participants had visited the TBB multiple times and participated in more than one of the three ACU TBB programs. For example, one participant noted his involvement over several visits as...

...conducting some 5 units in the first intake. Visited the camps on 3 occasions [A3].

Therefore, the insights into the praxis of blended learning in the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB offered by the ACU academic participants is extremely valuable to validate responses by the ACU TBB refugee students in Chapter 8 and to explore the issues of blended learning on the TBB from an academic's perspective.

Apart from introductory demographic questions, all ACU academic participants were initially asked if they were familiar with the term 'blended learning'. All ACU academic participants in this study indicated that they were aware of the term. This was a result of the participant's level of experience in academia. Besides delivering F2F and online learning components of the blend in the ACU TBB programs, the academics also possessed at least a decade of experience in delivering

online learning and using an array of online learning and student management packages (SMPs) such as WebCT and Blackboard at their Australian institutions; predominantly ACU but also the University of Wollongong (UOW) and Royal Melbourne Institute of technology (RMIT).

When the ACU academic participants were asked to provide a general description of how the processes of blended learning occurred, a focus on conventional teaching philosophy soon emerged in comments offered by the ACU Academic participants...

Essentially with my particular involvement it was face-to-face, something which I AND the students preferred. E-learning is fine, but only in support of face-to-face [A2].

This comment mirrors opinion provided by all refugee student participants (see Chapter 8) who understand that online learning is a necessary component of the blend as it facilitates delivery of education when the preferred method of delivery by the student's (the F2F lecturer or guest tutor) is unavailable due to the remote location of the learning environment and prohibitive costs associated with running a fully-staffed education program by ACU on the TBB. For all ACU academic participants their participation in their respective TBB program/s was seen by themselves as an act of service, human rights and allowed for the academics to offer their insights into course related subject matter and when opportunities presented themselves for teacher-student conversations to move away from specific classroom lessons to touch on a topic such as the experiences of the refugee students on their journeys to becoming refugees.

A concise description of how each part of the blend (e-learning and F2F) worked was provided by one participant who indicated...

...material was placed on line. Tutorials were run by local tutors during the week. ACU lecturers went up once a year to assist [A3].

The basic skill of critical reading which is essential regardless of which component of the blend is occurring at any given time was highlighted by the on-ground tutor for the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program. When asked about the make-up of the blend in education delivery for that particular program, the tutor commented that...

...that's a tricky one because there's also a great deal of reading and the readings of course are the textbooks and this is what I am always going on at them it is all very well going to the laptops but there is critical reading that has to be done and if it is not done then they are not covering the course, not doing enough on the course, you know? [A1].

When the ACU academic participants were asked to describe the advantages of each part of the blend one participant indicated how E-learning enabled...

...Potential 24/7 access of student to his/her instructor and educational provider; immediate access of online resource material; online communication, support, and exchange of ideas, etc., with other similarly connected students; and the generally accepted advantages of ICT [A3].

Another participant agreed that “E-learning is quick” [A2]. The common disadvantages of the online learning component of the blend, as reported similarly by the refugee students in the following chapter, was that it could not be as effective as the “face to face component which enabled clarification of material and assessments” [A2]. Another participant described how...

...E-learning lacks the pastoral component (fundamental in the refugee context) and the integrity of a learning relationship which can only be established face-to-face and in a bricks and mortar classroom [A3].

In summary, one participant linked the principle of blended learning to the effectiveness of the technology used for delivery... “In principle blended learning is excellent, but it is invariably heavily biased towards ICT” [A2]. Once again, this comment mirrors those made by the refugee student participants in Chapter 8. More significant though are the comments by the on-ground tutor for the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program. The tutor noted that the advantages and disadvantages of each component of the blend can still enable effective education delivery as long as a sense of flexibility exists. The participant described the issue of flexibility this way...

...I remember somebody, one of the lecturers or one that came over the Internet that it had been in on a given time or they would lose points. Well it doesn't work here. It's impossible because they can be suddenly sprung into camp or the security people could clamp down and it wouldn't be the first time [A1].

After the processes of blended learning and the advantages and disadvantages of each component of the blend were described, all ACU academic participants were asked to offer suggestions into how blended learning could be improved for future ACU TBB programs. One participant believed that a solution would be for...“better computer facilities and qualified on site tutors. This may well be the case by this time” [A2]. Another participant indicated that...

...Face-to-face should be considered the primary mode of delivery with e-learning comprising the support component. Both e-instructor and field instructor should be suitably trained and qualified to deal with ACU Border programs and made aware of the challenges and major difficulties pertaining to both modes of delivery in this type of specific learning and delivery context [A3].

The participant's comment touches not only on core educational activities but also to the issues of health and well-being of ACU lecturers, tutors and guests who are faced with a vastly different context of education delivery than they are normally accustomed to when participating in education at their home campuses. Each lecturer, tutor and guest returns from their stint on the TBB with mixed emotions. On the one hand there is recognition of humility and a quiet sense of satisfaction at a job well done but on the other hand there is also a sense of regret that after getting to know the students and having them open their hearts to you, you must leave them with a faint promise of return when possible. In the case of the researcher there was also a lingering sense of guilt as Lee Weiner's assertion that ... "we are all refugees of a future that never happened" (McCall, 1977, p. 1) came to mind as he left the ACU TBB study centre on his return journey to a safe, stable and loving family, work and life environment.

## ***7.5 ACU TBB Academics – Significance of Participation in the ACU TBB Programs***

One academic who spent time at the ACU TBB study centre giving lectures and running tutorials for the ACU TBB Diploma in Business program suggested that his involvement in the program was...

...probably the most important program that I have worked on in my 30 years as an academic...certainly the most satisfying [A3].

Another academic who made 2 intensive visits to act as tutor for the Certificate in Theology refugee student cohort described his involvement as follows...

...It was a significant experience for me for it allowed me access to a new 'repertoire' (the Asian) and challenged me to another definition of the term to 'serve' and to find greater joy in the 'charism' of teaching [A2].

The academic is also quoted publicly as saying that...

The final day with our students was one of the most memorable experiences of my life; it was a celebration of all that is good in people (Veling, 2007, p. 1).

Dr. Terry Veling who coordinated the delivery of the ACU TBB Diploma in Theology program offered his insights into the programs and their significance...

...Personally, as an academic and an educator, I have found it a unique and inspiring experience (Veling, 2007, p.2).

Professor Mary McFarland, Dean of Professional Studies at Gonzaga University and International Director of JC-HEM taught in the orientation phase of the initial Diploma in Liberal Studies module as well as academic writing and research skills to the refugee students at the ACU TBB study centre in 2010 Professor McFarland indicated...

... Without education, people will have no chance other than to resort to violence...Because of their education, these students are people who can step forward and have a voice. Despite the violence that has been shown to them, they can choose a different path (ACU, 2010, p. 1).

Professor McFarland went further and described her 'obligation' to assist in the education of the 'bright young minds' of the refugee students in the ACU TBB programs...

...We have so many unbelievable gifts and blessings, that to make one small pebble-in-the-pond difference to people who have lost almost

everything including family is incredible...I think we are obliged to do it.

It's a gift. It changes our lives (ACU, 2010, p. 1).

### **7.5 Conclusion**

The ACU TBB academics have played an integral role in not only delivering the F2F and online component of the TBB programs but also providing empathetic support for the refugee students and collective solidarity in guiding the students through their studies often in exceptional circumstances impacted by the psychological and physical environment of a refugee classroom on the TBB as part of the face-to-face component of blended learning. The approach of social capital of the ACU TBB academics was shown to be a hybrid approach of collective and relational social capital and predominantly the type of social capital was bridging where relations are generally between the academics and their associates and colleagues. Despite limited data available on the ACU TBB academics functioning as a CoP, the general notion indicated by the academics is that they perceive themselves to be a CoP with a shared passion or concern, a mutual engagement and associated essential access to a shared repertoire which is consistent with elements of a CoP. Further research will be necessary to validate this superficial finding as more academics become involved in the ACU TBB programs. This point is raised in Chapter 9, Section 9.4.3. The focus of the thesis now turns to the final and arguably the most pertinent case study; the ACU TBB refugee students.

## CHAPTER 8 – THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY THAI-BURMA BORDER REFUGEE STUDENTS

*Education is a companion which no future can depress, no crime can destroy,  
no enemy can alienate it and no nepotism can enslave.*

Ropo Oguntimehin

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents Case Study 3: The ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort. The chapter begins by providing background information on the geographical location and physical layout of the ACU study centres where the delivery of the ACU TBB programs occurs. The chapter then follows the similar theme adopted across Case Study 2 whereby the praxis of social capital, community of practice and blended learning of/ by the ACU TBB refugee students is explored. The chapter concludes by providing testimony from two ACU TBB refugee students on their path towards becoming a refugee, the significance of what attainment of accredited higher education means to them and their intentions of putting their newly garnered qualifications to use in seeking out further learning opportunities and supporting their refugee communities on the TBB.

An embedded design is used for Case Study 3. Case 3.1 explores and analyses the social capital of the refugee students in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program. Case 3.2 explores and analyses ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort as a community of practice and Case 3.3 explores and analyses the role and contribution of blended learning towards the attainment of higher

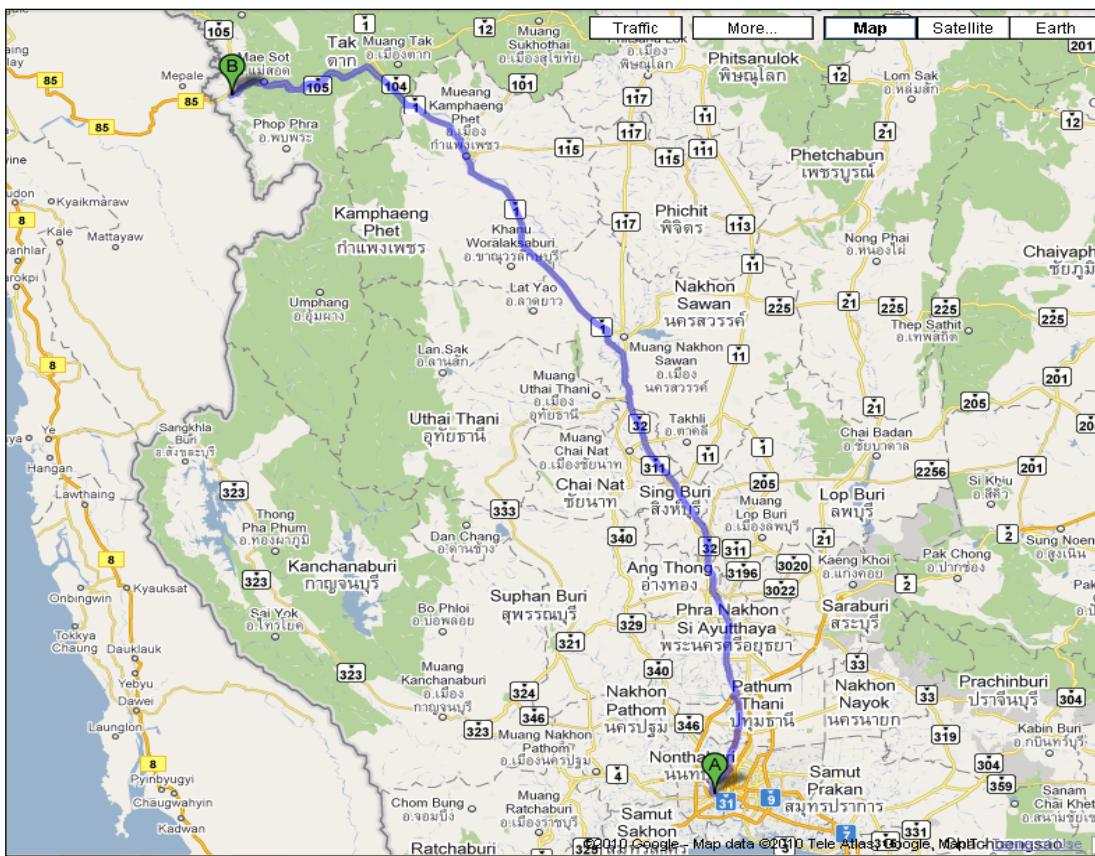
education by refugees on the TBB. The embedded structure of Case Study 3 is shown in Table 12.

**Table 12: Embedded design of the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort case study.**

<b>CASE 3 THE ACU DIPLOMA IN LIBERAL STUDIES REFUGEE STUDENT COHORT</b>	
<b>CASE 3.1</b>	<p><b>Social Capital of the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort</b></p> <p><u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of social capital within the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort.</p> <p><u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how social capital within the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort has contributed towards the attainment of higher education for refugees on the TBB.</p>
<b>CASE 3.2</b>	<p><b>The ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort as a Community of Practice (CoP)</b></p> <p><u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort as a community of practice of learners.</p> <p><u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort community of practice has contributed towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.</p>
<b>CASE 3.3</b>	<p><b>Blended Learning and the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort</b></p> <p><u>Purpose 1:</u> To conduct an exploration and descriptive analysis of the use of blended learning by refugee students in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program.</p> <p><u>Purpose 2:</u> To understand how the use of blended learning by refugee students in the ACU TBB programs has contributed towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.</p>

## **8.2 The ACU TBB Study Centres**

The ACU TBB programs have been delivered in private residences near the town of Mae Sot, Thailand. Mae Sot (see location *Marker B* on Figure 9) is a town in Tak Province, located on the Moei River, across from Mywaddy town in Karen State, Burma (Arnold & Hewison, 2005) and is described as a Burmese-Chinese-Karen-Thai trading outpost (Brees, 2008b; Lonely Planet, 2011) approximately 500 kilometres from Bangkok (see location *Marker A* on Figure 9).



**Figure 9: Location of Mae Sot, Thailand.**

(Source: Google Maps).

Due to its remote location and an ongoing lack of scheduled direct air passenger services from Bangkok to Mae Sot, the ACU TBB program coordinator, lecturers, tutors and guests normally travel to Mae Sot by bus (approximately 9 hours) from Bangkok. An alternative option is to fly to the ancient Thai capital of Sukhothai and travel by bus or car to Mae Sot; a journey of approximately 3 hours. Either journey is met with trepidation the closer the traveller gets to Mae Sot due to the treacherous TBB mountain roads and numerous military/ security checkpoints. The lack of regularly scheduled air passenger services from Bangkok to Mae Sot is surprising considering the substantial presence of international NGOs working with refugees in camps to the north and south of the town.

### 8.2.1 *The ACU Mae Sot Study Centre (Location 1)*

ACU's TBB Diploma in Business and Certificate in Theology programs were delivered at what was termed an 'ACU Study Centre' near the town of Mae Sot. For all intents and purposes the study centre was a small traditional Thai house. From a resource perspective, the learning environment of the ACU TBB study centre was described by an ACU academic participant as having "very poor resources - three PCs and one phone line – and students were forced to move from one safe house to another to avoid detection [by Thai government authorities]" [A3]. Another ACU academic participant offered the following thoughts on the physical learning environment at the ACU TBB study centre for the refugee programs...study centre

...A learning environment can be "created" as long as the essentials are available (tables, chairs, blackboard). Additional resources would have been helpful in the form of ICT support. At the same time a small but basic library of books would have been crucial. This was an essential requirement and should be considered a requisite [A2].

Limited learning resources were not the only issue faced by students, lecturers, tutors and guests alike at the ACU Study centre at Mae Sot. The physical classroom environment was also unacceptable to the ACU on-ground tutor for the TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program who described the Mae Sot study centre as follows...

...it wasn't as pleasant as the initial study centre, it wasn't as good, the sewage leaked, you could smell it, you could hardly breathe half the time. There were mozzies around and it was unsuitable and I was unhappy thinking that I was going back to my place which is quite comfortable and leaving them there to cope with this. That's why I said to Duncan [Mr Duncan MacLaren, ACU's Coordinator of Refugee Programs on the

TBB], let's do something about this and he said I'll leave it to your discretion and we came up with this house.

Facilitated by a move to a new location, the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program was delivered in the current ACU Study centre near Mae Sot.

### 8.2.2 *The ACU TBB Study Centre*

The current ACU TBB study centre consists of 2 inconspicuous two-storey Thai houses. Each building is set on a small plot of land with enough space in the front and back yards for the refugee students to either gather together or seek their own solitude outside of class activities. Several banana plants are dotted along the right-hand side and back of the house. Upon entering the house, the visitor immediately arrives in the classroom area. A number of desks have been set up in an 'L' shape which follows the front and left-hand side structure of the house. The accent of the tutor, an Australian flag hanging from one wall and a souvenir kangaroo are the only visible hints to the origins of the education provision at the study centre.

On the right-hand side of the classroom is a bookcase which acts as the study centre's library. There are a small, but growing, number of texts, reference books and mementoes given to the students by visiting ACU staff and guests. Beyond the library is a set of stairs leading to the second-storey which contains the living quarters for the students and a toilet and shower. Eight refugee students were living permanently at the study centre at the time of the researcher's visit in April 2010.

The classroom is resourced with laptops (one each per house student and tutor), whiteboard, and digital projector and networked Internet access points. A large fan acts as the classroom's only mechanical means of cooling in the relentlessly oppressive Thai heat.

A small entrance way leads the visitor from the classroom at the front of the study centre to the kitchen area at the rear of the study centre. Located in this small kitchen room, approximately half the size of the classroom is a dining table big enough for 4-6 guests (located on the left-hand side of the kitchen area) and a desk and computer with Internet server (located on the right-hand side) predominantly for the use of the tutor and lecturers and guests visiting the centre. The study centre's refrigerator and a second toilet are also located in the small multi-purpose room behind the classroom. A door leads from the kitchen area to the back verandah. This outside space acts as utility area for food preparation and the washing and drying of clothes. Overall, the rooms of the study centre fulfill the roles of classroom, home, sleeping and entertainment quarters while the refugees are studying their particular intensive TBB program.

The learning which takes place inside the classroom at the ACU TBB study centre is a blend of F2F and online learning activities. This blended learning occurs predominantly at the course level (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2). Unreliable Internet access sometimes restricts the amount of blended learning which can occur at the activity level where both F2F and computer-mediated elements occur in the same learning activity. The other consideration of the level at which the ACU TBB programs take place is at the institutional level where ACU has made a commitment to blending F2F and online learning. Blended learning by the ACU TBB refugee students will be further explored in Section 8.5 of this chapter. Now, the focus of the chapter turns to Case Study 3.1; the social capital of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort.

### **8.3 Case 3.1 - Social Capital of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies Refugee Student Cohort**

Case 3.1 follows the same descriptive analysis format which was used in Case 1.2 and 2.2. Firstly, the core social capital dimension of trust in relationships between the ACU refugee students and between the students, their teachers and tutors is explored through interview and online questionnaire responses by the ACU refugee students. Secondly, Brunie's (2009) approaches to social capital comparative analysis framework is used to determine the approach of social capital of the ACU refugee students and Woolcock's (2001) categorisation of bonding, bridging and linking types of social capital is used to determine the type of social capital of the ACU refugee students.

#### **8.3.1 Trust and the ACU Refugee Students**

The process of exploring the social capital of the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort began by establishing if the refugee students felt trust was important in relationships between themselves, their fellow refugee students and ACU teachers and tutors? Two refugee student participants indicated that they felt trust was *important* while six other participants indicated that trust was *very important*. When the refugee students were asked if they felt the level of trust in relationships between themselves and their ACU tutors and teachers had developed over time, the refugee students generally agreed and gave several examples. The issue of being brought together as strangers from different backgrounds to participate in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program was mentioned as a factor in the amount of time required for trust to develop between the refugee students and their teachers and tutors. For example, one refugee student participant commented...

...In the centre we have different ethnicities, different religions and...when building trust you need time. You can't simply observe people for 6 hours and tell they can be trusted [R1].

This comment is significant as half of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort temporarily reside at the ACU TBB study centre. Positive actions by the refugees build up the level of trust within the cohort and conversely breaches of trust have a detrimental impact on the overall harmony of the refugee student cohort. A refugee student participant linked the dimension of trust to the act of providing help to fellow students...

...I have developed the level of trust among my classmates and teachers. My classmates and I would sometimes do a group study and there are some students who could not attend the face-to-face tutorial all the time, therefore, we are relying on each other. We help one another by explaining to them how we understand the lesson and share with them the lectures from teachers [R2].

These interactions and others such as asking for assistance, clarification or offers of support from their fellow students, teachers or tutors which occur while the refugees are in their ‘student mode’ have the potential to impact upon the refugee’s relationships with their fellow students during time spent away from the classroom doing household chores, mealtimes or spare time. The refugee students who live and study at the centre cannot switch their perceptions on trust based on their student persona during class time or their refugee persona during all other time spent at the ACU TBB study centre. The refugee student’s perceptions on trust, regardless of persona, are one and the same while they are living and studying at the study centre.

To identify any link between the levels of trust which developed over time amongst the refugee students and teachers and tutors, the refugee student participants were asked if trusting their fellow students and teachers helped them during their learning in the ACU TBB programs. There was general agreement that the development of trust had helped the students in relation to their learning. One refugee student participant indicated...

... I have a friend here [the ACU TBB study centre] who is always keeping me up to date, typing up things and sending them to me like a sample of the assignment or something like that [R6].

### *8.3.2 Categorising the Social Capital of the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies*

#### *Refugee Student Cohort*

This section of the chapter looks at determining the approach and type of social capital of the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort. The process of categorisation is identical to the process used for categorising the approach and type of social capital of the RTEC and the ACU TBB academics. Descriptive analysis of the approach and type of social capital of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort are made by exploring Brunie's (2009) comparative analysis framework and Woolcock's (2001) three types of social capital.

##### *8.3.2.1. Approach of social capital of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort.*

Similar to the RTEC and the ACU TBB academics, the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort is a small and exclusive group. The students are from Burma and predominantly Karen ethnic origins. They have left their homeland in search of a safer, more secure life. All students in the cohort have been living in refugee camps on the TBB for at least 2 years and some for as long as

10 years or more. They have all completed secondary levels of education either in Burma or on the TBB and more than half of the cohort have completed part of a degree-level program at a university in Burma prior to their decision to become refugees. These common bonds, as well as being selected as members of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program, make the refugee students a relatively exclusive group of refugees on the TBB.

The social capital aspect of social life of the refugee students is characterised by individual attitudes and predispositions towards others and institutions. These attitudes have developed from personal circumstances of each refugee student as a result of experiences growing up in Burma and while on the path to becoming a refugee, experiences such as how the refugee was treated by the Burmese government and by fellow Burmese citizens not of Karen ethnicity. In regards to predisposed attitudes towards individuals, one refugee student provided an example of how her attitudes to a favourite teacher in Burma and a fellow student who were not of Karen ethnicity had changed as friendships were developed and how the process of reciprocity helped to form the attitudes of the refugee student. The refugee student described...

...When I was in Burma, before my university days I was very cliquey but after my school days I have a friend, she is Burmese, very, very good and she gave me some books to read [R2].

The dimensions emphasized in social capital of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort are characterised by resources embedded in personal networks and the social relationships which provide access to those resources. For example one refugee student found out about the ACU TBB programs

while working as an interpreter for JRS in Mae Sot. The refugee student describes the chain of events as follows...

...Before I joined this program I was with JRS Mae Sot and I met Duncan [Duncan MacLaren, Coordinator of ACU's TBB programs] who happened to be visiting there and he said they were having this type of program and I told him I wanted to join and he said everybody is welcome...I went for my interview with Duncan and this is how I got into this program [R1].

Another refugee student described how she was introduced to the opportunity of applying to study the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program through her social relationship with a colleague at UNHCR's Mae Sot field office. The refugee's colleague had studied the ACU TBB Diploma in Business program...

...my colleague just shared the information with me that she was doing this course, the Business Diploma and then she invited me for her graduation and I said ooh I also want to do this [R7].

A third refugee student was introduced to the opportunity of applying for a position in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies through the social networks developed by the refugee joining a religious congregation in Mae Sot. Unlike the prior refugee student's story of being made aware of the ACU TBB programs by a colleague who was a student in one of the programs, the refugee student in this case described how...

...I didn't know any one of the [ACU TBB Certificate in] Theology students but I knew of this program from one priest. He's living in Mae Sot and I often go to his house to worship and he introduced me to everything about the ACU programs...he mentioned there was a lot of interesting things to learn, this program covers many subjects [R4].

The three examples provided above show how different social relationships between the refugee students had with individuals and institutions prior to joining the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program assisted each refugee to firstly become aware of the ACU programs and secondly, to become involved in the Diploma in Liberal Studies program. One refugee student met the ACU TBB program director while working for an NGO, one refugee student had a colleague who had studied a previous ACU TBB program and another refugee student was introduced to the ACU through a Catholic priest working on the TBB. Each of these social networks provided access to embedded resources of the ACU TBB programs for the refugees and would not have been possible without the personal networks formed by the refugee students and their friends and colleagues.

The core processes of social capital of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort are characterised by thick mutual trust, norms of reciprocity and the aforementioned social networks. The core process of trust has been described in Section 6.3.1 of this chapter. In regards to norms of reciprocity one refugee student commented that it was very important for their teachers and tutors to consider the implications of being a refugee student on the TBB. There needs to be ‘give and take’ from the students and teachers and tutors perspectives in setting assessment cutoff times/ dates. For example, one refugee student indicated how there are times at the ACU TBB study centre when there is a power shortage which prevents the students from working on their computers or the connection to the Internet is not working for extended periods of time and students cannot access their online learning portals...

...In the situation we can ask our tutors...our teachers...please give us more time to take to finish the lessons [R4].

For the refugee students the issues of trust and reciprocity are connected together. You have one and the other because as trust is developed there is more give and take. When the refugee students were asked if they believed their teachers and tutors understood the difficulties of being a refugee student on the TBB, all refugee students indicated that they believed this to be the case. One refugee student summarised the feelings expressed by the cohort and gave the succinct reply...

...I think so. That's why they are here I think [R1].

Another refugee student gave an opinion on the reason why reciprocity by the teachers and tutors is important from the refugee student's perspective. The refugee student commented that...

...I think that is one thing that the lecturer should bear in mind, they need to be aware of our conditions here [R6].

Interestingly, one refugee student took the extended meaning of reciprocity to describe how it was important for the refugee students who were fortunate to have been given the opportunity to study higher education in the ACU TBB programs to pass on the knowledge and skills which they had learned. The refugee student commented...

...Even when we study from this course we take and then we have to give to maybe our friends or community [R4].

The utility of the social capital of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort is characterised by group-specific activity that cannot be pursued individually. As a group of individuals who have come together to participate in higher learning at the ACU TBB study centre, the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies student cohort conducts itself by engaging in group-specific

activity. The individual refugee students are part of a cohort and by the very nature of being connected as part of a group individual members of the group have a collective approach to the utility of the social capital of the group. Additionally, it is not feasible for ACU to offer an in situ program such as the TBB programs to a single student or even a few students. If ACU were to address the attainment of higher education for refugees on the TBB using a single student model then the most appropriate model would be to provide a tuition free place for a wholly online course. However, as has been noted in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 of this study, the lack of approved Internet access inside the refugee camps on the TBB makes the delivery of online courses impossible. The most feasible/ viable option for delivering accredited higher education to refugees on the TBB remains the blended learning model developed by ACU and followed by OUA and several Jesuit universities.

The fungibility across domains of the social capital of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort is limited due to the specific nature of being refugee students residing in refugee camps on the TBB. The social capital of the cohort has developed in specific ways as a result of the unique context the student's find themselves in. Prior to becoming 'refugee students' the refugees relied on the social networks and relationships they had forged with actors such as the UNHCR, NGOs and religious orders. The students have by their own reckoning been fortunate to have been made aware of the opportunity to study in the ACU TBB programs through their social networks and relationships with these actors. The social capital of the cohort which has developed as a result of involvement with ACU, the teachers and tutors in the ACU TBB programs and the Thai-based volunteers who provide on-the-ground support for the students, is issue specific to

being refugee students. The social capital of the cohort has limited exchangeability for this reason.

Therefore, based on analysis using Brunie's (2009) comparative framework, the social capital of the ACU refugee student cohort exhibits aspects of relational, collective and generalized approaches to social capital. This hybrid approach is comprised of relational aspects for dimensions emphasized and fungibility across domains, collective aspects for level of manifestation, core processes and utility and a generalized aspect for social life. The approach to social capital of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort is presented in Table 13.

**Table 13: Approach to Social Capital of the ACU Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort**

Component	Relational Approach	Collective Approach	Generalized Approach
Level of manifestation		*	
Aspects of social life			*
Dimensions emphasized	*		
Core processes		*	
Utility		*	
Fungibility across domains	*		

#### *8.3.2.2. Type of social capital of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort.*

The social capital of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort is comprised predominantly of bridging and linking types. Bonding social capital is the least of the three type of social capital exhibited by the refugee students. These findings are not surprising considering the context in which many of the refugee students find themselves in; separated from family members, close

friends and neighbours. These extenuating characteristics prohibit the development of bonding social capital. Several of the refugee students indicated how they have decided to embark on the perilous journey to becoming a refugee, leaving family support structures behind or how they have followed a sibling in becoming a refugee. One refugee student described how her brother had crossed the border from Burma into Thailand in 1996 leaving the refugee student and her mother to deal with harassment from the Burmese government...

...because my brother, in 1996 participated in student revolution demonstration and the police authorities follow him and catch him and he came here...but he did not contact us in Burma. One day he contacted my mother and she came to this Thai-Burma border and met with him in Mae Sot...and when she went back home they [Burmese authorities] came very often. At my house we lived with only my mother and my sisters, there is no man in our house so when they came it was very complicated and when my mother had contact with her son he told us to come here [the TBB] and then we came here [R2].

After making the decision to cross the border from Burma into Thailand and become a refugee, the refugee student now has even less immediate family support around her and diminished bonding social capital.

Several of the refugee students described how they became aware of the ACU TBB programs through a social network of friends in the refugee camps along the TBB or from colleagues which they work with for NGOs on the TBB. Another refugee student described how he was introduced to the ACU TBB programs via the social network the refugee had developed by attending a church group run by a Roman Catholic priest in Mae Sot. This linking type of social capital exhibited by the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort affirms the notion

by Woolcock (2001) that the key function of linking social capital is its capacity to leverage resources, ideas and information from formal institutions beyond the community. Without linking social capital it is likely the refugee student would not have been made aware of the ACU TBB programs, not applied and been accepted into the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program.

For the refugee students, access to the ACU TBB program resources such as courseware, content, academic skills and research training, and the social connections and ability to forge new relationships with fellow students, teachers, tutors, administrators and RTEC members has been a direct result of the practical application of linking social capital within the ACU TBB programs.

The resources offered by the ACU in their TBB programs are simply beyond reach to the extended refugee community along the TBB. The ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort has managed to leverage access to these resources (the bulk delivered by ACU) and in turn the praxis of social capital has enabled the refugee students to attain higher education.

#### ***8.4 Case 3.2 - The ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies Refugee Student Cohort as a Community of Practice (CoP)***

Case 3.2 explores the refugee students who were participating in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program from the perspective of a CoP. Using a similar process to that of the RTEC members and ACU TBB academics, refugee student participants were initially asked if they were aware of the term ‘community of practice’. No refugee student indicated that they were aware of the term. One refugee student participant indicated... “No but I am aware of a group of people doing things for the community” [R1]. When the students were presented with Wenger’s (1998)

definition they all agreed that the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies cohort was indeed a CoP. As far as one refugee student participant understood it ... “We care about our fellow students health, study, security, everything” [R1]. One refugee student indicated the common concern for the refugee students in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies cohort was in... “...trying to get a university education” [R5]. Other refugee student participants indicated that the primary common concern they have is being refugees and concern for their refugee community on the TBB and family members living in Burma. Another refugee student participant described how the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies cohort learned to improve the way they did something by doing over and over again...

...like learning to use the online systems of the universities...submitting our assignments, writing essays, how to find references, all those sort of things [R3].

A final refugee student participant summed up the commonality between all the refugee students by indicating...

We share the same fears, the same dreams ...mostly the same aspirations of what we want to do in life [R7].

Of the three core components of CoP’s (a passion or common concern, shared repertoire and mutual engagement) the responses by the refugee students touched briefly on agreement that they considered themselves a CoP as they were sharing the common concern of life as a refugee searching for higher education opportunities on the TBB and that once engaged in higher learning, a mutual engagement and access to a shared repertoire were vital to their academic success. The limited understanding from data returned by the refugee students attempting to analyse or provide examples

of their cohort as a CoP is evident in the following passages. This lack of understanding is also further addressed in Chapter 9, Section 9.4 of this thesis.

The majority of refugee student participants had difficult putting into words examples of any shared repertoire they had as a CoP. Only one refugee student participant offered a description of what they felt was indicative of a shared repertoire amongst the cohort. The refugee student participant spoke of how tasks, roles and responsibilities the student's performed while at the ACU TBB study centre were considered a form of a shared repertoire...

...We all have a schedule for the house especially when it comes to cleaning and cooking. Once a week we come into our group, everyone involved as a community thing to clean the whole compound and things like that and do things together like have a meeting together as a community with everyone involved [R1].

The shared repertoire surrounding the competent use of the Blackboard system was noted. The specific language (jargon) used in carrying out standard procedures needed to be learned and developed within each CoP of refugee student cohorts. In particular it was generally agreed upon by all refugee students that access to any shared repertoire be made available to all refugee students in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies cohort and that the on-ground tutor and study centre student leader played a role in this.

Despite the low level of understanding by the refugee student participants of elements of CoP's such as mutual engagement and shared repertoires when compared to the RTEC or ACU TBB academic participant respondents, one significant finding emerged. One student described the simple nature of information exchange that was at the heart of the refugee student CoP as... "We meet, we chat, we talk..." [R4]. This

concise, yet insightful comment brings the reader back to an original example given Lave and Wenger (1991) in the formation of theory on CoPs whereby Xerox technicians exchanged information in an informal manner and informal location and in the process learned how to improve on what they were doing. It is unlikely that Lave or Wenger had a refugee study centre in a location of protracted forced migration crisis in mind as the site of a CoP, however the refugee student's comment illustrate the broadness of the praxis of a CoP.

### ***8.5 Case 3.3 - Blended Learning and the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies Refugee Student Cohort***

Blended learning was not a term the refugee students were familiar with. However, while the refugee students may have been unfamiliar with the actual term used to describe what they were participating in, they all understood the distinct processes of F2F and online components involved. When the term 'blended learning' was defined to them, the refugee students agreed that Heinze and Procter's (2004, p. 10) definition of blended learning fit closely with their circumstances as refugee learners in a location of protracted forced migration crisis. The students could easily identify how their learning was being facilitated by having F2F and online delivery of content, exercises, assignments, lectures and tutorials. Students were also consulted and engaged by the ACU TBB Coordinator, lecturers and tutors to assist with program delivery. The student body elected one of their fellow classmates to act as the student/house leader and this enabled a way for communication to flow freely between the students and the ACU TBB administration and teaching team. Importantly, this aspect also enabled the transparent communication among all parties as envisaged in Heinze and Procter's (2004) definition of blended learning.

### 8.5.1 *Online Component of the Blend*

Each refugee student participant was asked to describe from their perspective the process of how blended learning in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program worked. Firstly, the refugee students described online learning and gave examples of the Blackboard login and announcement processes involved. One refugee student participant clarified how directions for completing daily, weekly or assessment tasks were communicated by the remote teacher...

...Usually the teacher gives us the whole syllabus for the course so that we have some idea what is going to happen in the next 8 weeks. [The syllabus arrives] via email and that is how we get into our respective website [R1].

This process mirrors the delivery of the unit of study outline to students enrolled for on-campus or online studies in ACU courses. Another refugee student participant described the resources and process of gaining access to necessary online information...

...for online learning we need a laptop computer and Internet connection and then we login using the information given to us by the various universities. You use your login, password, get in [R1].

This process of logging in and being authenticated into the online learning environment of ACU or any one of the TBB program partner universities is the same process as for local and international, on-campus and off-campus students at ACU or any of the TBB program partner universities. Characteristics of location and type of student (a TBB refugee) has no bearing on the process. Login and authentication are mechanical processes and not contextual to the TBB program. Once logged into the

online learning environment (Blackboard), the student is able to select a link for each unit they are enrolled in and be taken to the course content and tools for that unit.

There is a dual process of reinforcement in place to ensure the refugee students comprehend the action required for the course and individual learning activities. In tandem, the on-ground tutor informs the students of what is required to be accomplished for certain planned activities. Students then login to the Blackboard system and are able to access additional details of what the lecturer/ coordinator requires the students to do. Students have access through Blackboard to unit of study outlines, course material such as lecture notes and assessment descriptions and collaborative tools such as discussion boards and wikis. One refugee student participant described the process as...

...We login to our Blackboard and there are some descriptions some faculty expectations and context. We do weekly discussion posts [R7].

The refugee student added....

...Once a week the lecturer gives us time to post a discussion, we have to post on Wednesday, so from Monday to Wednesday we do our own discussion. Then from Thursday to Saturday we have to respond at least 2 times. Sometimes we respond and [name of lecturer withheld] has questions about our topic which we have to answer for her. [R7].

Another student painted the picture of how communication occurs in the classroom between students and a remote lecturer as part of the online learning.

The teacher may be in... let's say Brisbane, Australia. In the classroom here in the study centre we have 3 or 4 students talking together...it is very good, sometimes we can watch because we have cameras and can see the expression on the teacher's face. You tell whether she is serious or

having fun or...much better than emails...where you are not sure of what they mean [R3].

The on-ground tutor acts as a bridge between the online and F2F learning activities. The tutor is able to clarify any issues the refugee students may have to do with online activities. For example, one refugee student participant described how...

...If we have any questions we can ask him or if we are not sure what we have to write like grammar... mostly in the afternoon he goes through the textbooks with us [R7].

#### *8.5.2 Face-to-Face Component of the Blend*

When a lecturer or coordinator visits the ACU TBB study centre for intensive one or two week teaching sessions the study centre functions very much like a conventional ACU university classroom setting. One refugee student participant described the scenario when a teacher from ACU visited the refugee students in March/April 2010...

...When she [name withheld] came here we had two classes, one day time and one evening. I'm a day student. When she gave her lecture first of all she would introduce the topic... she used PowerPoint and she explained. She gave some logic and notes and then she asked us for our feedback [R3].

Another refugee student participant added...

...when the lecturer is here then usually the lecturer will give us the concept about this subject or unit and of course for each unit it is different and of course each lecture and class activity or group activity is...like a class, yeah. We maybe work for 2 to 3 hours, have a break [R4].

More generally, one refugee student participant described the typical day for a student at the ACU TBB study centre...

...We start at 9:30 in the morning and at 10:30 or 10:45 we take a short break like a coffee break or something like that. At 11 we start again until 12:30 when we take a lunch break and then 2 to 4 we work on [R7].

One important aspect of the F2F blend is how all of the refugee students are required to attend the ACU TBB study centre while the visiting lecturer or guest tutor is delivering their subject. This enables all students to have time to discuss any issues with the lecturer or tutor F2F while the lecturer or tutor is on site rather than needing to clarify issues from a distance once the lecturer or tutor has departed the TBB. There is also the opportunity for the refugee student to clarify procedures in using the Blackboard system, assignment submissions and feedback mechanisms available through the Blacboard system. One refugee student participant described how the refugee students residing at the study centre and those students working for NGOs along the border are encouraged to participate as a cohort during the intensive teaching and learning sessions which occur when there is a visiting lecture or tutor...

...every student has to be involved, every student from outside and the house students [R7].

Another refugee student participant was asked if, for example, the refugee students were given ‘homework’ to do in preparation for the following day’s activities. The refugee student participant added with laughter...

...Yes, after we learn together from the topics, tomorrow we have to finish some work. They give us some homework and activities to finish in the evening and tomorrow we need to show the teachers the work. This is one thing which is happening [R3].

A beneficial aspect of F2F in the ACU blended learning program was described by one refugee student participant as...

...when we study together in the classroom and I read through the paragraphs, through the page, if I don't understand very well and if I have some questions then I have the chance to ask my teachers to explain more to me [R3].

One refugee student participant concisely summarised their praxis of blended learning in the ACU TBB programs by linking the F2F back to online learning components of the particular blend whereby the refugee students...

...mostly rely on the Internet. For face to face the lecturers they come here for 10 days and tell us you do this...they just give us the picture and the rest we need to do through the Internet ACU system [R5].

For the ACU refugee students the remoteness of location of their education delivery necessitates this approach to a significant reliance upon the online learning component of the blend.

### *8.5.3 Improving the Blended Learning Experience*

To sum up the discussion of blended learning from the refugee student's perspectives, each refugee student participant was asked to suggest any ways in which the process of blended learning could be improved for future TBB programs. All refugee students indicated that improved Internet access would be welcomed. This is hardly surprising and shows how vital access to online information when requested is for engaging learners in online activities. With such intensive timeframes of program delivery in the TBB programs, losing just one day due to a loss of Internet access can make a significant impact on forward scheduling of teaching and learning activities and particularly assessment submissions despite flexibility incorporated into the

schedule of teaching activities. One refugee student indicated with some resignation about inconsistent Internet access...

...Yes, definitely that's an issue...sometimes it's a frustration that we have here [R1].

The refugee student participant continued by indicating that one of the main issues for effective learning was ideally increasing the amount of F2F time as part of the blend...

...face to face is very useful and sometimes If we could get them for 2 weeks at a time, 3 weeks at a time, it would help a lot with our understanding and doing our own assignments and things like that [R1].

Just one extra week would make a really big difference to the students as the refugee student participant added...

...it definitely helps in our understanding and grabbing the concepts of what we are going to encounter in the course [R1].

Additional F2F in the blend would also be welcomed according to other refugee student participants...

...I think more face to face tutor because we still have Internet access but of course our lecturer is busy with other work...I know they pay attention, they contribute their effort to us but still if we have someone here to come to straight away... [R4].

Another refugee student added...

...For me sometimes what I don't like is that you can't see the lecturer so you don't know even though you are reading her notes you don't know how she really intended for you to grab the concept. Sometimes it is good if you can see her face and...the emotion on a person's face [R5].

This issue of clarifying details required by a subject lecturer/ coordinator was also raised by other refugee students as one issue which needs constant addressing. One refugee student participant described how unclear or misunderstood instructions, inconsistent Internet access and the remote location of the refugee students at the ACU TBB study centre all conspired to make online learning difficult for the refugee students...

...If you have a teacher that sent you the syllabus and clarified everything that she expected out us [it] is very good. Sometimes the lecturers did not do that. It is very difficult for us but we have to correspond, ask her, and send an email and it takes time and sometimes you have this [internet] disconnection problem [R1].

Another refugee student participant added that...

...we cannot abandon online activities because we have to use the Internet to research some topics and it better than only reading our textbook, I think. Sometimes the writings in the textbook are a little complicated because it is our second language [R2].

One issue which was raised by several of the refugee students was in regards to being unfamiliar with online learning and student management systems such as Blackboard. A refugee student participant stated how...

...I think it was a little bit difficult for me when I started this course because I was not familiar with the system. I was lost in the Blackboard, how to login, all this technical stuff, where to go, where to search for my assignments [R4].

This illustrates how important having an on-ground tutor available to assist the students in these introductory technical issues or having the lecturer visit the study centre in the initial week of a program as the refugee student participant added...

...When this course started [Name of subject coordinator withheld] and [Name of teaching participant withheld] they were here so they were helping the students, how to get familiar with the Blackboard and all this stuff. Even the term Blackboard is quite new to us [R4].

Another refugee student participant indicated that finding the correct overall blend was most important.

...We are learners, students and teachers. From my experience in the first course, we studied business communication and information technology and so after our tutors go back to their countries, to Australia, we used Skype to communicate online and sometimes it is very good for us if the connection is available, if the connection is working very well then we can talk with each other very smoothly [R3].

This mirrors issues raised in literature as it eliminates the potential for a misalignment of blend components identified by Graham (2006) whereby the blend may include “...the least effective elements of both worlds if it is not designed well” (p. 8). Having an initial F2F component at the start of all courses would also assist with the level of comprehension of what is being asked of the students in class activities and assignments. One refugee student participant stated how the on-ground tutor assists with readings...

...because the reading is not in our Mother tongue...so it is very difficult...like some special terminology which have very different meaning [R4].

This comment links directly with the ideas expressed in the literature review by Richardson (2011) (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2) who found that “the language of technology, referring to both English and technical language, was often not compatible with end users’ past experiences, ability levels, or existing resources” (p. 20). It also

enables academic support staff to visit and assist with follow-up tuition for predominantly online courses. For example, one refugee student participant described how one such person came to help after the lecturer/ coordinator of the Anthropology subject in the Diploma in Liberal Studies program left the study centre. This academic support person “also helped us with citation, using APA<sup>38</sup> and all this kind of thing” [R4]. Finally, one refugee student participant suggested that any higher education program on the TBB should be based...“in Mae Sot..., close to the refugee camps. If it is in Chiang Mai or Bangkok it is not possible” [R2].

As can be seen from the responses by the refugee students, the blended learning which occurs within the ACU TBB programs is multifaceted whereby learning access is mediated by technology and supported by intensive F2F teaching and learning sessions initiated by visiting lecturers and guest tutors and a link maintained between both parts of the blend by the permanent on-ground tutor. In the blend, regardless of component the one vital factor is the awareness that the blended learning in the ACU TBB programs has three perspectives; the student, the teacher and the institution.

## ***8.6 Discussion***

Several ACU refugee students described their uncertain, often perilous path to asylum. Loizos (2000) notes although refugees very often lose their economic and material capital, they rarely lose nearly as much of their human and social capital. This statement has not been entirely true for most of the refugee students interviewed in this study. The refugee students have often left close family members and friends

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<sup>38</sup> APA is a referencing style guide designed by the American Psychological Association.

behind in Burma as they have crossed the border into Thailand. As a result, the refugee students have lost major sources of bonding social capital and while some of the refugee students have built new social capital through friendships formed with other refugees inside the TBB refugee camps, the amount and structure of bonding social capital for the refugee student is different than in the past. Thick mutual trust, not created through the bonds of family, takes time and stability to develop. While the refugee students have time, they do not have the stability of family or other avenues in which social capital may develop such as a career life. As the timeline in Figure 1 (Chapter 2) showed, refugees on the TBB have been living in limbo for more than twenty years and from the responses by the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort, some of the students have been on the TBB for more than ten years.

The act of participation in the ACU TBB programs has facilitated the development of a ‘baseline’ social network for all refugee students across the three TBB programs. Some of the ACU TBB refugee students, through their employment with the UNHCR, NGOs or religious orders on the TBB have been able to develop far more extensive networks than has been possible by those refugee students confined to the ACU TBB study centre compound or refugee camp. Regardless of the refugee student’s network being representative of the generic or extensible format, both forms of networks have served as conduits as Putnam (1993) suggests, for the flow of helpful information which has facilitated achieving the goal of the refugee students to attain higher education on the TBB.

The findings on categorization and type of social capital of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort support the notion by Loizos (2000) that despite a refugee’s stock of human and social capital being “greatly reduced, or

devalued by dramatic changes in contexts where they could be applied, the refugees may with time, determination, and support, replenish them” (p. 126).

Understandably, the lack of awareness of the term ‘CoP’ by the refugee participants was balanced by their ability to understand the concept of a CoP and present at least limited examples of how their ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort could fit Wenger’s definition of a CoP.

Before concluding remarks are made for the chapter, the following brief testimonies to the way in which the refugee students applied themselves to their studies at the time of the ACU academic participant’s visits to the ACU TBB study centres are presented. ACU academic participants were asked for their impressions of the level of enthusiasm shown by the refugee students. Responses by the ACU academic participants included...

...Excellent considering their history. They had a thirst for learning [A3].

...High levels of enthusiasm throughout, decreasing only when the refugee student felt the demands of the subject were increasing in difficulty. This was fundamentally due to the fact that the comprehension levels of the students ranged from very poor to very good. This points to the need for a more deliberate selection process, or even to a potential two tier class which would be good [A2].

As can be seen from the responses of participants who have witnessed first-hand the students engaged in learning at the ACU TBB study centres, the value of participating in the ACU TBB programs to the refugees is self-evident. As several of the refugee students indicated in their interviews, they fully understand the blessing bestowed upon them in being given a place in the ACU TBB programs. They see it as

an honour and are determined to excel in the opportunity provided not only for themselves but also on behalf of their families and local refugee communities.

### ***8.7 Testimony: A Tale of Two Refugee Students and ‘Thank You’***

The following refugee’s stories of life on the TBB highlight the challenges faced by refugees to attain accredited higher education in a location of protracted forced migration crisis and the transformative power of education as an agent of change. The refugee’s identities are not disclosed. Instead they are referred to by codes R1 and R5 throughout the following section. R1 is a male student and R5 is a female student. Both are of Karen ethnicity.

R1 has been living as a refugee on the TBB for more than 3 years. Despite R1 attending university in Burma and studying science for one year prior to crossing over the TBB into Thailand the highest level of completed education R1 obtained prior to becoming a refugee was the equivalent of a high school diploma. One feature of the ACU programs on the TBB which appeals to R1 is the secular nature of the selection and admissions process...

...even though this is an ACU program there is no limitation on religion, ethnicity or whatsoever background so this is very great [R1].

The opportunity to participate in the ACU programs has been a blessing for R1. Without an opportunity to study many of the refugees become frustrated...

...It is very frustrating. Although I am only here for three years I have seen my friends, I have seen people who have grown up in the camps for their entire lives which is twenty, twenty-five, thirty years and not having any opportunity for higher education and ended up doing drugs and all those sorts of things. If you look around this Thai-Burma Border, this is

the only highest level of education you can get along this border I think, that is internationally recognised, accredited and credible and people have learned and heard and like I said I have talked to my friends and a lot of them really want to be a part of this program but unfortunately ACU can do very little but at least I think so far this is a very good program for the refugees and for the community and the region [R1].

R1 did not participate in the previous ACU TBB Diploma in Business or Certificate in Theology programs prior to being selected to participate in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program. R1, who was working as an interpreter for JRS in Mae Sot became aware of the Diploma in Liberal Studies program after meeting Mr Duncan MacLaren, ACUs Coordinator of Refugee Programs on the TBB while Mr MacLaren was visiting the JRS Mae Sot office.

...I met Duncan who happened to be visiting there at that particular office and he said they were having this type of program and I told him I wanted to join and he said everybody is welcome. I went for my interview with Duncan and this is how I got into this program [R1].

R1 was thrilled to be informed of acceptance into the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program.

...I always wanted to continue my studies. Of course it was always my first priority to get back to Physics, whatever it is, Science...but now that I am a refugee I look around and I have nothing, I see nothing, and this is the first chance I have, not only for me but for everyone around here and this is a fantastic opportunity. For me I am thrilled [R1].

When considering what he saw as his future once the refugee student had completed the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program, R1 was circumspect...

...I don't know how I will be able to take that opportunity and go forward. I don't see this as a stepping stone...if by God's will, I would like to use this as something to carry forward to improve not only me but everyone around me and it will have the ripple effect [R1].

R1 was asked how life had changed as a result of participating in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program. R1 placed their reply into the context of potential impact on family and community and replied...

...Back home I cared about my family, that's it. Nothing more because I understand you have to take care of family because that is our culture...but now it's you can take care of family but you also need to take care of those around you because now especially the refugees and migrants are deprived of everything which is basic...nutrition, education, health, security...and when you ask me whether I want to use this as a stepping stone to go back to Physics probably no because I want to do something which is more beneficial for the community. Maybe I will take other courses in the Arts but I'm not going back to Science anymore. Community Development or something like that or Religion or whatever it is [R1].

The change in mindset by R1 can be attributed partly to the social interaction with other students, teachers and tutors at the ACU TBB study centre. Approximately half of the total refugee student cohort also resides at the study centre. Living in such close quarters with very little opportunity to leave the centre for fear of arrest and the associated disrupted study and potential deportation has bonded the student cohort. R1 indicated...

...I have only been here [the TBB] 3 years. I never thought I would be in a community that has a lot to do with education and refugees, dealing with a lot of foreigners and this and that. I knew about this area...when

you talk about the Thai-Burma border there has always been bad news in things going on in this area but now that I am in this area and now that I have met people in this program who grew up in this area I can now understand their feelings because when I was in Burma I thought we all have problems it is just the different forms...surviving and things you know...It's more than that I think ...but now because of this program I think more about the community [R1].

When R1 was quizzed to the most significant aspect of being involved in their ACU TBB program R1 replied that it wasn't the qualification to be gained or the friendships made. Rather it was the combination of those aspects...

...It's the whole thing. It's the dynamic of being in the program. It's everything because now I have friends I would never have been able to know. I am really grateful I have these kinds of people, these kinds of friends that I have never thought of seeing them in my entire life. I am grateful to know people like Duncan and Frank and all the lecturers and professors who are coming here. This is wonderful [R1].

Hackman (2005) writes that “social justice education encourages students to take an active role in their own education and supports teachers in creating empowering, democratic, and critical educational environments” (p. 103). When asked if R1 thought the experience of participating in the ACU TBB program was beyond participation in a simple education course, that participation in the program was an example of applied social justice whereby a holistic approach to the learning and the welfare of individuals occurred and a contribution to the ‘life education’ of the refugee students was the intangible outcome compared to the piece of paper (testamur) R1 replied...

...It's a package. I don't know for other people but for me it is definitely a package. For me this is something you experience getting to know people that you have never thought of from different parts of the world and seeing that these people care about...I mean this particular program which is small but they all are committed and also seeing each and every one of us who are in this program committed to fulfil the expectations of the program which is great you know? [R1].

Final thoughts offered by R1 were based on how best to apply the knowledge learnt from participating in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program. R1 indicated that he definitely wished to use the qualification in terms of gaining employment on the TBB. When pressed further regarding the best option for himself if democracy returns to Burma and he managed to take his qualification back to his homeland to help his community, R1 indicated...

...Yes, go back and help the community. Back to Burma is the best we can ask for, knowing that it is very much impossible. I'm not saying this is not worth it, I am saying this is education here on the TBB is something we can acquire and apply if we have a society in Burma that is more stable and peaceful, things like that [R1].

R5 has been living in the Mae La camp on the TBB for more than 4 years but has not registered with the UNHCR to be recognised as a refugee. R5 crossed into Thailand from Burma to escape harassment of the Burmese authorities. R5 explains...

...in 1996 in Burma there was some university student revolution, he [R5's brother] participated in this revolution demonstration and the police authorities followed him and caught him... he managed to come here [the TBB]. When we went back home they [Burmese authorities] came very often. At my house my sisters and I lived only with my mother, there was no man in our house so when they came it was very complicated and

when my mother had contact with her son he told us to come here and then we came here [R5].

R5 intends on eventual registration with the UNHCR as she sees that process as a possible way forward for herself, her sisters and mother.

...My brother has already resettled in Australia as a refugee because he had already registered [with the UNHCR], so he can go. We came late [during the camp registration moratorium imposed by the RTG in 2005] but registration will be an outcome, because without it we have no way [R5].

When asked what she hoped to do with the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies qualification she was about to be awarded, R5 succinctly responded...

...The thing I would like to do most is I want to take care of my family, my family means my mother and my sisters [R5].

When pressed further, R5 commented...

...I think if I have such qualifications I can participate in development programs in our country but not on the Thai-Burma border [R5].

R5 explained that she did not share the mindset of absolute hatred of Burmese which many ethnic refugees on the TBB possessed. R5 described how the 1949 rebellion in Burma affected her mother...

...she does not love her country; she loves only Karen, but not me. I am not the same.

When R5 was asked if the best outcome for her situation was to see a peaceful, democratic Burma she replied, "I love the people who are peaceful...it doesn't matter the ethnicity...religious..." [R5]. The attitude of R5 towards the Burmese in

comparison with her mother was formed through two experiences she had during her high school and university studies in Burma. R5 described...

...I was very cliquey but after my school days I had a friend, she is Burmese, very, very good and she gave me some books to read...when I was in university I had a favourite teacher, he is Muslim, but even though he is Muslim I respected his teachings and care he showed for his students...[R5].

R5 is pragmatic and realizes her return to Burma will not be possible as long as the status quo of military junta and ethnic cleansing remains.

...To go back to Burma according to the situation, it will not be possible. You know, even if I go to a third country and I resettle and assimilate, I may become a US citizen or Australian citizen but your genes cannot lie. I am interested in my country. Not only one ethnic group [R5].

When R5 was asked if the qualification gained or the friendships formed was the most significant part of participating in the ACU TBB program, R5 replied that it was the application of the knowledge gained which was most significant...

...The qualification is important, the friendship is important...but for me I appreciate the knowledge from the course and one thing very important is I have seen some people who have some knowledge from the course, they know, they understand, they realize but they do not practice it...that's a problem [R5].

The issue of applying the knowledge gained from participating in the Diploma in Liberal Studies program has changed R5 as a person, her outlook and her feelings towards all players in the refugee milieu on the TBB; particularly the Burmese...

...Mentally it has changed me because especially when we have talked about leadership theory and anthropology and now psychology, when I

have studied theory and people thinking without consequence, thinking critically like that, I now know why I feel the way I do when confronted with so many issues as a refugee. Before I would think these people [Burmese] are very, very cruel and very tough and very selfish, I used to think like that but now I understand that we need to be diplomatic whenever we have to face such activities [R5].

To conclude the discussion on testimony the following heartfelt thanks from a refugee student from the ACU TBB Certificate in Theology cohort to the dedication of the ACU academics involved in the TBB programs is provided. The refugee student fondly recalled their experiences with the Certificate in Theology program and one particular ACU tutor...

...I want to thank my tutor Dr. Michael for his love and concern for us and the time he spent with us. He gave himself fully to us, even when he got sick, he tried to enter the class everyday with us. A million thanks to ACU and to all who have worked for us and struggled in arranging this program. From your loving Karen refugee student. (Veling, 2007).

### ***8.8 Conclusion***

This chapter presented Case Study 3: The ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort. The findings from the chapter indicate that the ACU TBB refugee students exhibit aspects of relational, collective and generalized approaches to social capital. The social capital of the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee student cohort is comprised predominantly of bridging and linking types. Despite being unaware of the concept of a community of practice, the ACU TBB refugee students indicated that they perceived themselves to be a functioning CoP

when informed of the definition of a CoP; however, this study finds that further investigation is required to substantiate this claim with empirical evidence.

One definitive finding in the case study was the preference by the ACU TBB refugee students for a larger proportion of the teaching and learning blend to be given to F2F but also an understanding of the essential nature of the online learning component due to the high costs of resourcing the ACU TBB study centre with full-time personnel from Australia or the TBB and the logistics planning needed to support visits to the study centre by ACU lecturers, tutors and guests based in Australia, the United States or elsewhere.

The physical classroom is of little significance in the overall scheme of blended learning for the refugee students in the ACU TBB programs. Some classes at the initial ACU TBB study centre were conducted in an area without walls or windows. However, what is of significance is the ability to provide a flexible learning framework for the refugees with components of F2F and online learning that enables the overall objective of attainment of higher education for refugees on the TBB.

The chapter concluded by providing testimony from two selected refugee students to the significance of the ACU TBB programs as one step towards resolving the refugee camp as campus paradox. The following chapter will present a summary of the findings from this study and describe how the combination of the three elements of social capital, communities of practice and blended learning provide a model for in situ refugee higher education in locations of protracted forced migration crises.

## CHAPTER 9 - CONCLUSION

*We shall not cease from exploration. And the end of all our exploring will be  
to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.*

Little Gidding: Four Quartets, (Eliot, 1943, p. 38).

### 9.1 *Introduction*

This study has explored the phenomena of attainment of higher education by refugees in a location of protracted forced migration crisis. Firstly barriers and constraints were identified from a priori of previous studies and literature on refugees and refugee education in particular. These barriers and constraints were then validated in the context of the TBB by policy-makers and practitioners in the field of refugee education. The study's focus then moved to the practical application, *praxis*, of theories of social capital, communities of practice and blended learning in overcoming complexities of attainment of higher education for a select few refugee students on the TBB. Central to the exploration of how the role and contribution of each of these three theories contributed to the attainment of higher education for the refugee students were the perspectives of the refugee student participants themselves in the ACU TBB programs delivered between 2003-2010, the ACU academics who delivered the course content to the refugee students in F2F and online modes and from the perspective of members of the RTEC who have been able to transition their vision of in situ refugee higher education into reality with the assistance of ACU (and other university institutions) as the operational actor/s. The insights proffered by these three distinct participant groups are what give this study its authenticity.

This chapter revisits the two broad research questions posed at the outset of this thesis and discusses how each question, aim and objective of the study was achieved. The main purpose of the chapter is to inform the reader of the key findings of this study and to propose recommendations for the effective delivery of future in situ refugee higher education programs on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises. The chapter concludes by discussing avenues for further research into the topic of attainment of higher education by refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises.

## **9.2 *Findings***

The discussion on findings for this study is based around the two broad research questions posed at the outset of this thesis. The questions were ‘*Why is the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB and in locations of protracted forced migrations crises so scant?*’ and ‘*How have the ACU TBB programs been achieved?*’. The findings for these questions will now be discussed.

### **9.2.1 *Why is the Attainment of Higher Education by Refugees on the TBB and in Universal Locations of Protracted Forced Migration Crises so Scant?***

The key finding of this study in regards to why the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises is so scant is that funding of such programs is inhibitive. Policy-makers and practitioners involved in refugee education nominated funding as the most significant issue as a barrier or constraint to the delivery of accredited in situ refugee higher education. Funding for refugee higher education requires expenditure on infrastructure such as buildings, furniture conducive for classroom activities, computing equipment such as laptops, modems, servers and printers, and support and

administration personnel. Other direct costs include salaries and wages of academics, insurance premiums and travel and logistics-related expenditure. Goodwill and in-kind donation of time and equipment can no longer be the status quo model of delivering programs of in situ refugee higher education. A collaborative funding, burden sharing arrangement is required for a paradigm shift towards effective, accredited in situ higher education for refugees as described in this study. The RTEC-ACU model has proven that this new paradigm can work with the outcome being the manifestation of the right to higher education based on merit becoming available for refugees languishing in locations of protracted forced migration crises.

Security of personnel and equipment necessary to deliver accredited in situ higher education to refugees in any way other than as a token gesture, along with a range of socio-political issues were nominated as the next most significant reason for why programs of in situ refugee higher education are so scant. The very nature of the physical environment in which in situ refugee higher education programs must operate are such that unavoidable increased risk to the safety of personnel involved in education provision may also be a consideration. International education providers intending to deliver in situ refugee higher education must work within security frameworks established by the UN and host countries so as not to endanger the academics or for that matter the refugee students. These precautions must also extend to the protection of equipment necessary for the delivery of the education as part of any blended learning program. The black market economy which permeates protracted forced migration crises would otherwise consume these valuable resources and only add to the funding burden of education providers through the cost of replacing stolen equipment.

Technical issues and the mobility of refugees were the next most significant barriers or constraints and were followed by a lack of willing tertiary education institutions and a lack of guidelines. The main technical issue identified was the lack of Internet access. The study finds that an ongoing dialogue between the UNHCR, iNGOs and the RTG is a realistic way forward to establishing protocols which will permit the use of the Internet inside refugee camps on the TBB. As long as the RTG refuses permission for official Internet access inside the camps there can only be two options available for attainment of higher education by the refugees on the TBB, the ACU model whereby a study centre is setup as close as practically possible to a refugee camp or the Dundalk Institute of Technology model of F2F offline education delivery. In this situation only ACU's model offers the encapsulated learning experience possible through blended learning courses.

The least significant finding of why the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB and in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises is so scant is a lack of suitably qualified refugee students on the TBB. On the TBB in particular there is no excuse in saying there aren't enough refugees at matriculation level. Rather, the findings of this study suggest that in regards to a ready and willing pool of potential refugee students 'if you build it, they [the refugee students] will come'<sup>39</sup>. Furthermore, this study highlights how university institutions will find ways of assisting refugees to make their way to where the education programs can be delivered in as safe, practical and feasible locations as possible.

The study has also challenged the conventional view of a university classroom and showed that blended learning for refugees can occur in any location where there is at the very least intermittent Internet access for online learning and an

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<sup>39</sup> Adapted from W.P. Kinsella's (1982) 'Shoeless Joe'.

overall willingness to learn by the refugee students. The reader is reminded of the description of the initial ACU TBB study centre, a refugee classroom in a location of protracted forced migration, whereby the classroom had... “no walls, no doors, no windows—the ‘light’ came and went as it pleased” (Veling, 2007).

Identifying the barriers and constraints to the delivery of higher education to refugees on the TBB and in locations of protracted forced migration crises are one thing, however there needs to be a way of overcoming or working around these issues which can result in the desired outcome of refugee students participating in accredited higher education programs. Overcoming the complexities of attaining higher education for refugees on the TBB has the potential to directly address each of the inhibitors to freedom outlined by Amartya Sen (see Chapter 3, section 3.1) for refugees residing in camps along the TBB. Taking Sen’s argument and extrapolating it to the core process described in this thesis of attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB through the delivery of accredited higher education programs by ACU can be seen as enabling a fundamental freedom and in turn supporting the development of the individual refugee student and the refugee’s community on the TBB. Furthermore, as several refugee student participants indicated in interview responses, the attainment of accredited higher education qualifications may have a latent affect in assisting with the development of Burma if the socio-political situation in Burma improves to a position where these refugees with their newly acquired qualifications can return safely to their homeland.

### 9.2.2 *How Have the ACU TBB Programs Been Achieved?*

The second broad research question posed at the outset of this thesis was “*How have the ACU TBB programs been achieved?*”. The answer to this question can be found in the following discussion on how the aims and objectives of the study were

achieved. The first aim of this study was to understand how a vision of higher education for refugees in a location of protracted forced migration crisis transitioned to a reality. The key finding of this study in regards to this aim is that the manifestation of the ACU TBB Diploma in Business program, and the researcher is adamant that it could be argued the subsequent ACU TBB program deliveries of Certificate in Theology and Diploma in Liberal Studies, was as a direct result of the initial vision of one man, Fr. Michael Smith. This statement cannot be underestimated. The determination and commitment of Fr. Smith as convenor of the RTEC and conduit to the ACU's involvement has been a key factor in the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB. A vision was developed by Fr. Smith and nurtured through the embryonic growth of RTEC, the background work of planning, strategy and feasibility was done and universities were invited. This collaboration was a simple, elegant solution to the delivery of in situ higher education for refugees on the TBB without relying on the UNHCR to take the lead. The ACU generously agreed in the pilot phase and subsequent deliveries and others such as universities associated with OUA and partner universities have since come on-board to transition the original RTEC vision of in situ refugee higher education to reality. This has been made possible through personal networks and the formation of social capital of members of the RTEC and representatives of ACU, OAU and partner universities. However, social capital has not been the sole panacea but rather this study finds that the praxis of social capital in combination with the praxis of communities of practice and blended learning are ways of achieving the goal of in situ delivery of higher education to refugees in an effective, practical and feasible manner. These findings will now be discussed in further detail.

### *9.2.2.1 The role and contribution of the praxis of social capital.*

This study finds that social capital has been instrumental in the formation of the RTEC, the involvement of ACU as the operational actor in the delivery of accredited higher education to the refugees on the TBB and amongst the refugee student cohorts themselves. Bonding social capital has been evident in the relations between close friends (for example Fr. Smith and Dr. Marie Joyce. See Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1) and even family (the brother of a RTEC committee member visited the ACU TBB study centre to help deliver one component of the ACU TBB Certificate in Theology program). In another example of bonding social capital, a close friend of one RTEC member also accepted an offer to help deliver the ACU TBB Certificate in Theology program; an offer accepted graciously without hesitation.

More commonly, bridging social capital has been evident in the approaches made by Fr. Smith to the Executive Boards of ACU and OUA. The commitment from ACU should also be acknowledged, especially support of the TBB programs from ACU's Emmeritus Professor Peter Sheehan, Vice Chancellor Professor Greg Craven, retired Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Gabrielle McMullan and Professor Gail Crossley, Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences amongst others. Linking social capital has been evident in approaches made by the convenor and long-standing members of the RTEC to sympathetic individuals in positions of power such as representative of Australian government aid agencies and NGOs. However, the clearest expression of linking social capital evident from this study is in the relationships the refugee students formed with members of the RTEC and ACU as direct participants in the ACU TBB programs. These relationships enable the refugees the capacity to leverage resources, ideas and information from formal institutions beyond the immediate refugee community. This finding validates the notion made by

Woolcock (see Chapter 3, Section 3.1.1.). The level of importance of trust in relationships between all stakeholders in the ACU TBB programs was highlighted as being very important and trust was described as developing over time and as a result of reciprocity.

As indicated, this study finds that the role and contribution of the praxis of social capital along with the praxis of CoP and blended learning is a trinity for the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB. The discussion of findings in regards to role and contribution of the praxis of CoP now follows.

#### *9.2.2.2 The role and contribution of the praxis of communities of practice.*

This study finds that there exists CoPs in the RTEC, the refugee student cohorts and within the group of ACU academics that planned and delivered the ACU TBB blended learning programs. When each group was explored using the core dimensions of sharing a passion or common concern, regular interaction, mutual engagement and sharing repertoires, it was evident that each group was a CoP working their way towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB. The iterative nature of having three programs delivered under the RTEC-ACU model has enabled each program to be refined as a result of lessons learned where there was no previous model or roadmap to success to follow. This study also found that the effective operation of each CoP hinges on the mutual engagement and access to the shared repertoire. Without these two components this study asserts that each subsequent ACU TBB program delivered would not have been as effective. The interesting finding from all cases in this study is how regardless of setting, the practical application of a CoP can be utilised to enable a group of individuals to work together to become efficient and effective at what they do by participating in an iterative

process with a common goal. For this study all participants were working towards the common goal of attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB.

The final praxis component of the trinity of theories which have enabled the ACU TBB to be achieved is blended learning. The role and contribution of this praxis will now be summarised.

#### *9.2.2.3 The role and contribution of the praxis of blended learning.*

This study finds that a feasible context-appropriate model for delivery of accredited in situ higher education to refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises is blended learning. This model encompasses aspects of F2F with synchronous and asynchronous online learning. The blend allows for refugee students to participate in intensive workshops where instruction is given by visiting academics from host institutions and periods of directed or self-directed online learning. This flexibility is the greatest advantage of the model whereby programs such as those delivered by ACU on the TBB can occur when denied permission to Internet access by a host country exists – refugee students learn at study centres based outside the camps rather than inside which is a work-around solution to Internet access issues – or for any situation/ location where Internet access is permissible and a truly in situ model of delivery can occur. The connectedness to the outside world enabled by the online learning component of the blend is a welcomed addition to the F2F learning and teaching offered solely through offline courses. The availability of ICT has opened up many new possibilities into new territories otherwise inaccessible. Not only do refugee students gain access to academics located at leading university institutions throughout the world, they also get the opportunity to immerse themselves in scholarly activities related to the process of research such as searching online academic journals, and participating in collegiate activities such as online discussions with fellow students and

the broader online community. However, as has been illustrated in this study the task of delivery is not easy and requires commitment not only at the institutional level but also at the ‘coalface’ where the ACU academics, tutors and volunteers are faced with the challenge of keeping the blended learning systems running. Social capital has played its role here as well with the development of relationships among the key stakeholders vital to the effective and efficient functioning of the F2F and online learning components of the blend.

This study finds that there needs to be a development of trust and an understanding of the unique environment in which the ACU TBB study centre operates in. For example, the refugee students in the ACU TBB programs do not necessarily require greater flexibility in due dates for assessment submissions than on-campus students participating in the same courses in Australia. Rather, the teachers of the refugee students simply need to be flexible and aware that the context for any reason for inability to meet assessment submission deadlines or extended leave of absences from the course being studied may occur for a range of reasons; power outages as a result of the monsoon or an urgent requirement to return to the refugee’s camp. This understanding comes about because of the formation of trust and particularly through bridging and linking types of social capital. Drawing the praxis of social capital and CoP together in this instance is the finding that that the level of comprehension of difficulties faced by the refugee students has been based on the workings of the ACU academic CoPs. A comprehensive list of issues which may arise throughout the course of a program, based on previous lessons learned is one outcome of the development of the ACU academics who have participated in the TBB as a functioning CoP. This finding adds to the body of knowledge on CoPs by indicating that core activities and knowledge management from one CoP can be readily taken-up, adopted or integrated

by another group of individuals conducting similar based activities. The group of ACU academics who participated in the ACU TBB Diploma in Liberal Studies program, the third ACU TBB program, could be viewed in this scenario as a ACU TBB ‘CoP 3.0’.

#### *9.2.2.4 Other reasons why the ACU TBB programs have worked.*

This study also identified how the ACU TBB programs have worked because of the inclusivity of the refugee student intakes and a sense of spirituality embedded within the individuals involved in the phenomena. The inclusivity has manifested itself whereby there has been a purposeful inclusion by ACU of refugees from different genders and ethnic backgrounds into the ACU TBB programs.

In regards to spirituality, the final word on why the ACU TBB programs have worked is provided by the Convenor of the RTEC, Fr. Michael Smith who suggests that the concept of spirituality has been at work in the actions of the RTEC members, ACU academics, volunteers and the refugee students themselves. It should be remembered that not all members of the RTEC are members of faith-based religions and that by the truest definition the RTEC is a secular organisation. However, there has been, according to the researcher, an X-factor at work in the now decade-long work of the RTEC and ACU in a shared vision of attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB. Although no empirical evidence exists to suggest that the ‘Spirit’ has been with everyone who has participated in the ACU TBB programs, many participants acknowledged something akin to spirituality at work. As one RTEC member indicated... “[Fr.] Michael [Smith] would say: The Lord works in mysterious ways - good things happen from the peaceful sharing of time, thoughts, silent and spoken” [C4]. Or perhaps the ‘spirit’ has truly been manifested in a genuine missionary zeal to serve and to provide both aid and help by the members of the RTEC and academics

from the ACU and other university partners to those who are far less fortunate than themselves.

### *9.2.3 Achieving the Objectives of the Study*

There were four objectives of this study. The first objective was to formally document the ACU TBB programs as archetypes of higher education delivered to refugees in a location of protracted forced migration crisis. This objective was achieved by describing the ACU TBB Diploma in Business, Certificate in Theology and Diploma in Liberal Studies refugee programs delivered on the TBB between 2003 and 2010. This was carried out by exploring the participation in the programs and presenting testimony from the perspectives of the refugee students and from the ACU academics who delivered the courses.

The second objective of this study was to examine the role of the RTEC as a catalyst for in situ refugee university education on the TBB. This objective was achieved by describing the committee, its genesis, evolution and its ongoing associations with ACU, OUA and American-based Jesuit universities which have enabled the committee to transition their vision for in situ delivery of higher education to refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises to reality. Once again, the testimony supplied by members of the RTEC provided the strongest support to the findings in this study of the RTEC as a grassroots refugee advocacy group and catalyst for refugee university education on the TBB.

The third objective of this study was to use theories of social capital and communities of practice as theoretical lenses to examine relations between members of the RTEC, between the RTEC and ACU and also between refugee students and academics involved in the ACU TBB programs. This was carried out by identifying

the approach to social capital by the RTEC, ACU academics and refugee students and by describing the bonding, bridging and linking types of social capital. In regards to CoPs, this was carried out by exploring the experiences of members of the RTEC, the ACU TBB academics and the ACU TBB refugee students in sharing their common concerns or a passion, the identification of shared repertoires and the necessity of being mutually engaged in the process of attainment of higher education for refugees on the TBB.

The final objective of this study, to explore the role and contribution of blended learning towards the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB was achieved by exploring the praxis of blended learning from the perspectives of the ACU TBB academics who planned and delivered the programs, by the refugee learners themselves and by basing the discussion of blended learning into the real life context of the ACU study centres on the TBB. This reality supported the claims made in this study that blended learning is a viable option for a comprehensive, non-trivial delivery of accredited higher education to refugees on the TBB and in locations of protracted forced migration crises.

Despite the obvious focus or setting of this study on the TBB, the purpose of the research has always been to explore the phenomena of attainment of higher education on the TBB with one eye on the ‘bigger picture’ of contributing towards resolving the universal refugee camp as campus paradox. Implications from this study on the TBB which may impact on the effectiveness of future deployment of higher education programs in locations of protracted forced migration crises other than the TBB are now offered within the following discussion of recommendations.

### **9.3 Recommendations**

This study recommends seven strategies for resolving the refugee camp as campus paradox. These strategies are based around the design of future higher education programs for refugees delivered into worldwide locations of protracted forced migration crises by universities either individually or in partnership with other higher education institutions and/ or members of the international NGO education community. The strategies cover issues of policy inclusion, political dialogue, collaboration, up-to-date needs assessment, diversity, promotion of in situ refugee higher education archetypes and practicalities of in situ delivery.

#### *9.3.1 Refugee Higher Education Policy*

This study asserts that higher education should be added to the UNHCR's blueprint for establishing livelihoods for refugees in countries of asylum (See Chapter 3, Section 3.1.3). This action would complete the spectrum of educational levels mentioned in the blueprint for supporting refugees and utilise the knowledge, skills, qualifications and life experiences (which the UNHCR refers to as Social Capital) which refugees bring with them, whether they be located in a location of protracted forced migration crisis such as the TBB, a host country or establishing themselves in a third country of permanent resettlement. In any discussions of refugee education there also needs to be delineation made between different levels of refugee education and do away with using an umbrella approach to labeling refugee education.

#### *9.3.2 Political Dialogue*

The second recommendation of this study is for an ongoing open and transparent political *and* socio-political dialogue between refugee host countries, the UNHCR and members of local NGO and iNGO refugee education community. The

signing of the UN Refugee Convention by non-signatories such as the RTG would enable improved protection of refugee's rights and act as a stable framework on which to address issues of delivery of higher education to refugees not just on the TBB but in universal locations of protracted forced migration crises. A level playing field whereby unambiguous requirements and obligations have been established and which are open to review for university institutions wishing to participate in the program delivery would perhaps encourage greater participation by these key stakeholders who through the provision of accredited programs provide legitimacy to in situ refugee higher education delivery.

### *9.3.3 Collaboration*

This study has shown that no single organisation, refugee relief or education provider within the context of protracted forced migration crises, can and deliver effective in situ higher education for refugees. Collaborative has be an imperative for success in the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB. The third recommendation of this study is that at the macro level, collaboration should be between at least an advocacy group or groups and an internationally accredited university institution (or consortium of institutions) with entrenched blended learning programs. At the micro level this study recommends the focus of the collaboration extend to the cognisant formulation of relationships between collaborators which builds social capital and fosters the development of CoPs.

### *9.3.4 Up-To-Date Refugee Education Assessments*

The fourth recommendation from this study is the undertaking of an updated, current needs assessment or survey of refugee education requirements in protracted forced migration crises is necessary to have a contemporary ‘mapped field’ which

would provide a quick reference guide and enable analysis of refugee education policy decisions over time. For example, an assessment survey could be used to determine the number of Non-English speaking Burmese refugees on the TBB. To see if future delivery of higher education programs in Burmese on the TBB is feasible. Such a process would find those refugees on the TBB who are qualified to matriculate into university programs but who cannot access ACU, OUA, Dundalk Institute of Technology or other programs where the refugee student must be fluent in the English language. This recommendation directly relates to recommendation five.

### *9.3.5 Diversity*

The fifth recommendation of this study is closely associated with recommendation four and is for the development of part or entire education programs which can be delivered in the mother tongues of refugees. In addressing this diversity and inclusion issue the potential pool of suitably qualified refugee students increases. This recommendation provides an equitable response to refugees who are capable of matriculation into university-level programs but are neglected on the basis of no education program offered in their mother tongue and no fluency by the refugee in the often ‘default’ language of delivery; English. For example, large refugee populations in Africa are fluent in French. Any implementation of ACU-TBB type programs into African locations of protracted forced migration crises will be more effective if students have the opportunity to study programs delivered in their own language. This recommendation is therefore a rallying cry to university institutions who conduct their programs in languages spoken by large populations of refugees, such as French and Spanish.

### 9.3.6 *Promotion of In Situ Refugee Higher Education Archetypes*

It is indicative of the extent of the problem of promoting exemplars of refugee higher education programs, such as the RTEC-ACU TBB programs, when a decade after the fledgling investigation into how to transition a vision of in situ refugee higher education into reality by RTEC began, and after three accredited programs of university-level education have been delivered by ACU and others such as OUA, that the UNHCR has now become ‘officially’ aware of the ACU TBB programs. This indicates a failing by the UNHCR to keep abreast of the developments in the field of refugee education and also a failing on behalf of the RTEC and ACU in making known to the key stakeholders in the in situ refugee education community of the successful completion of multiple deliveries of accredited higher education for refugees in a location of protracted forced migration crisis. It is acknowledged by the researcher that representatives of ACU have published articles and presented descriptions of their programs of education delivery on the TBB but more can be done. One simple step would be to continue dialogue with the UNHCR. The RTEC-ACU TBB programs are exemplars of the attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB. Through the promotion of the ACU TBB programs other university institutions could be guided on how to achieve successful and sustained programs for refugees in protracted forced migration crises. The ACU mantra for promoting their TBB programs should be ‘ACU – we can do it. Here’s how if you would like to do it too’. Similarly for the RTEC, ‘RTEC – we can do it. Here’s how if you would like to do it too’. This recommendation directly addresses the ‘crisis of imagination’, so succinctly analysed by Fr. Michael Smith and is perhaps the simplest recommendation to address or implement.

### 9.3.7 Practicalities of In Situ Delivery

The final recommendation of this study relates to two aspects of the practical nature of delivery of higher education to refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises; the importance of the role and contribution of the on-ground tutor to the management of program delivery and the specific location where the refugee education is delivered. This study finds that the presence of an on-ground tutor is vital to the efficient and effective running of the ACU TBB programs. The on-ground tutor is the conduit for the programs to be managed from the home base of the university institution. The complex physical and socio-political environment of protracted forced migration crises demands quick yet considered analysis on responses to the ever-changing environment and needs of all stakeholders, especially the university institutions and refugee students directly involved in any current programs. The role of the on-ground tutor enables this ability but goes beyond it by building up the intrinsic trust that creates the social capital between the institution and refugees. The on-ground tutor in reality becomes the teacher, administrator, friend, and family support mechanism for the refugee students. The selection process for this position would be well suited to a ‘Jack of all trades, master of none’.

In regards to the specific location where the refugee education is delivered this study recommends that universities set themselves up as close as possible to where refugees are situated. This follows the idiom ‘*If Mohammad cannot go to the mountain then the mountain must go to Mohammad*’. This was reflected in the overall assessment on location education provision on the TBB (see Section 8.3.3) where one refugee student suggested the location must be in Mae Sot or close to the refugee camps. If it is in Chiang Mai or Bangkok it is not possible [for the refugees].”

## 9.4 *Further research*

The final component of discussion in this thesis is the identification of areas into which further research should be considered to enable a greater understanding of the phenomenon of attainment of higher education by refugees residing in protracted forced migration crises. These areas include pedagogy associated with blended learning conducted in in situ refugee education and further empirical evidence supported through multiple comparative case studies.

### 9.4.1 *Pedagogy of Blended Learning in the ACU TBB Programs*

The pedagogical aspect of blended learning in the ACU TBB programs has been superficially covered in this thesis by exploring general design approaches, organisation and method issues which need to be addressed further in any comprehensive consideration of blended learning. In particular, attention is required through further study on content analysis, audience analysis, goal analysis, media analysis and strategies of online learning environments. This could be achieved by using Khan's Octagonal Framework (Khan, 2001). By conducting further exploration into these areas a more-rounded understanding of the issues at the nexus of teacher-refugee student pedagogy would be possible in the unique context of in situ refugee higher education.

### 9.4.2 *Comparative Case Studies*

The second suggestion from this study of an area where further research may be conducted is through comparative case studies. Rather than focusing on three theories such as this thesis has done with social capital, CoP and blended learning, future research could explore other programs on the TBB such as the Dundalk Institute of Technology program in the Nu Po camp. This would add to the body of knowledge

of attainment of higher education by refugees on the TBB. Alternatively, an exploration of attainment of higher education by Palestinian refugees, or other future programs of in situ refugee education which have been intimated at being established in discussions with the RTEC and JC-HEM could be conducted and cross comparisons made with this study on the TBB. Either way, cross comparisons would be useful and interesting contributions to empirical evidence on the phenomena of attainment of higher education by refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises.

#### *9.4.3 Substantial Exploration of the ACU TBB Academics and Refugee Student Cohorts as Communities of Practice (CoP)*

The final recommendation for an area of further research is that of additional exploration into the ACU TBB academics and refugee student cohorts as communities of practice. The small sample size of ACU TBB academics and the limited awareness of the concept of CoP's by the refugee students hindered the quantity (and quality) of examples provided in this study, particularly by the refugee students of core elements of CoPs such as mutual engagement and shared repertoires. As was indicated in Chapter's 7 and 8, evidence existed to support the notion that the ACU TBB academics and refugee student cohort were in fact functioning CoP's, however the generalizability of these findings cannot be strongly supported by the one off instance of data collection in the study with regards to the ACU TBB academics and refugee student CoPs, especially the extremely small sample size of total ACU TBB academic participants.

## **9.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has summarised the key findings of this thesis, shown how the research questions, aims and objectives of the study have been answered, made

recommendations for the effective delivery of higher education to refugees on the TBB and around the world and suggested avenues for researchers to ‘take up the baton’ of study into the attainment of higher education by refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises. Access to education is a fundamental human right and it is time to assert that this right be made available to refugees rather than as rhetoric or with the excuse that other priorities take precedence. Unfortunately, the recidivist nature of man’s inhumanity to man suggests that there will be an ongoing need for the delivery of higher education to refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises for the foreseeable future. The RTEC and ACU, as well as OUA and the Jesuit universities of Fairfield, Gonzaga, St. Regis, St. Louis should be applauded for *Quidvis recte factum quamvis humile praeclarum – Whatever is rightly done, however humble is noble.*

The number of TBB refugees who have graduated from ACU with accredited higher education qualifications is approaching fifty. This figure represents the number of refugees who would not have had the opportunity to study accredited courses, to be introduced to topics as broad as sociology, information systems, business, and human rights, to learn academic skills such as essay and report writing, to develop scholarly methodology, research and referencing skills, and to form friendships with numerous lecturers, tutors, and volunteers who accepted invitations to ‘pay it forward’ without a second thought. More importantly, the number of ACU TBB refugee graduates represents the number of refugees who are now capable of ‘paying it forward’ to members of their own refugee communities on the TBB and to members of their Burmese communities should they decide to return to Burma.

The refugee graduates are beacons of hope, of opportunity, of the sense that there are organisations, committees, groups of concerned individuals who are prepared

to act in support and solidarity with refugees languishing in protracted forced migration crises. By participating in higher education programs these ‘bright young minds’, as Fr. Michael Smith described the refugees who he met on the TBB in 2000, can rest assured that they have found their one true joy as George Bernard Shaw suggested...

...the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one;  
the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap;  
the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy (Shaw, 1903, p. 15).

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## APPENDICES

*APPENDIX A: University of Sydney & Australian Catholic University  
Human Research Ethics Committee Documents*



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31 March 2010

Dr Chun Hu  
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Dear Dr Hu

Thank you for your correspondence dated 21 March 2010 addressing comments made to you by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). After considering the additional information, the Executive Committee at its meeting held on **23 March 2010** approved your protocol entitled "**Towards resolving the refugee camp as campus paradox: The Praxis of Social Capital, Communities of Practice and Blended Learning in the Attainment of University Education by Burmese Refugees on the Thai-Burma Border**".

Details of the approval are as follows:

**Ref No.:** 12576

**Approval Period:** March 2010 to March 2011

**Authorised Personnel:**  
*Dr Chun Hu*  
*Mr Jason Sargent*  
*Dr Elizabeth Cassity*

**Approved Documents:**

**Participant Information Statement – RTEC Member Interviews, Version 2, March 16, 2010**

**Participant Information Statement – Refugee Student Interviews, Version 2, March 16, 2010**

**Participant Information Statement – Australian Catholic University (ACU National) Staff Member Interviews, Version 2, March 16, 2010**

**Participant Information Statement – Refugee Student Observation, Version 2, March 16, 2010**

**Participant Information Statement – Australian Catholic University (ACU National) Staff Member Telephone Interviews, Version 2, March 16, 2010**

**Participant Consent Form – Interview, Version 2, March 16, 2010**

**Participant Consent Form – Observation, Version 2, March 16, 2010**

**Participant Consent Form – Questionnaire, Version 2, March 16, 2010**

**Participant Consent Form – Telephone Interview, Version 2, March 16, 2010**  
**Telephone Interview Script, Version 2, March 16, 2010**  
**Participant Information Statement – Policy Maker or Practitioner Questionnaire, Version 1, February 1, 2010**  
**Participant Information Statement – Refugee Student Questionnaire, Version 1, February 1, 2010**  
**Interview Schedule – RTEC Members, Version 1, February 1, 2010**  
**Interview Schedule – Australian Catholic University Academics, Version 1, February 1, 2010**  
**Interview Schedule – Refugee Students Residing on the Border, Version 1, February 1, 2010**  
**Online Questionnaire Schedule – Policy Makers and Practitioners, Version 1, February 1, 2010**  
**Online Questionnaire Schedule – Refugee Students no longer on the Border, Version 1, February 1, 2010**  
**Observation Schedule, Version 1, February 1, 2010**

The HREC is a fully constituted Ethics Committee in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*-March 2007 under Section 5.1.29.

The approval of this project is **conditional** upon your continuing compliance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*. We draw to your attention the requirement that a report on this research must be submitted every 12 months from the date of the approval or on completion of the project, whichever occurs first. Failure to submit reports will result in withdrawal of consent for the project to proceed.

#### **Special Conditions of Approval**

Please forward ethics approval from the Australian Catholic University when available.

#### **Chief Investigator / Supervisor's responsibilities to ensure that:**

- (1) All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.
- (2) All unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.
- (3) The HREC must be notified as soon as possible of any changes to the protocol. All changes must be approved by the HREC before continuation of the research project. These include:-
  - If any of the investigators change or leave the University.
  - Any changes to the Participant Information Statement and/or Consent Form.
- (4) All research participants are to be provided with a Participant Information Statement and Consent Form, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee. The Participant Information Statement and Consent Form are to be on University of Sydney letterhead and include the full title of the research project and telephone contacts for the researchers, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee and the following statement must appear on the bottom of the Participant Information Statement. *Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney, on +612 8627 8175 (Telephone); +612 8627 8180 (Facsimile) or [\(Email\)](mailto:ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au).*
- (5) Copies of all signed Consent Forms must be retained and made available to the HREC on request.

- (6) It is your responsibility to provide a copy of this letter to any internal/external granting agencies if requested.
- (7) The HREC approval is valid for four (4) years from the Approval Period stated in this letter. Investigators are requested to submit a progress report annually.
- (8) A report and a copy of any published material should be provided at the completion of the Project.

Yours sincerely



Associate Professor Ian Maxwell  
**Chair**  
**Human Research Ethics Committee**

cc: Jason Sargent, email: jason.sargent@sydney.edu.au



St Patricks Campus  
Level 5, 250 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy VIC  
3065, Locked Bag 4115, Fitzroy VIC 3065  
Ph: +61 3 9953 3150  
Fax: +61 3 9953 3315  
Email: [res.ethics@acu.edu.au](mailto:res.ethics@acu.edu.au)

Mr J Sargeant  
PhD Candidate  
Faculty of Education & Social Work  
Education Building, A35  
University of Sydney, NSW 2006

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2010

Dear Mr Sargeant

Thank you for your recent request seeking approval to conduct your project exploring university-level education for refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crises at the Australian Catholic University.

As this is a University of Sydney project you will need to observe all ethical processes, and any complaints from participants should be directed to the appropriate HREC Chair or other designated Research Ethics Officer.

We have a copy of your current ethics approval and note that this is due to expire in March 2011. Should your application be extended past March 2011 and you still require access to ACU students please ensure that an appropriate request is forwarded to the ACU ethics committee ([res.ethics@acu.edu.au](mailto:res.ethics@acu.edu.au)).

We are therefore prepared to permit you access to ACU students, provided permission is received by the appropriate course co-ordinator of the Thai-Burma Border Program.

Regards

**Associate Professor Janis (John) Ozolins**  
Chairperson, HREC  
Tel: (03) 9953 3140  
Fax: (03) 9495 6082  
Email: [john.ozolins@acu.edu.au](mailto:john.ozolins@acu.edu.au)

**Australian Catholic University Limited**  
ABN 15 050 192 660  
CRICOS registered provider:  
00004G, 00112C, 00873F, 00885B

2010/2P30

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <b>ETHICS OFFICE</b>            18 JUN 2010  <b>DATE RECEIVED</b> </div>  <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <b>THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY</b> </div>	<p><b>Address for correspondence:</b>            OFFICE OF ETHICS ADMINISTRATION            LEVEL 6            JANE FOSS RUSSELL BUILDING – G02            THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY NSW 2006</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>APPROVED</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>to 6/7/10 Please forward a copy of the formatted online questionnaire Be full.</i></p>
<b>HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE REQUEST FOR MODIFICATION</b>	
<p>1. <b>Principal Investigator:</b> Dr Chun HU</p> <p>Department: Education and Social Work</p> <p>Address: Room 247, Building A.35 University of Sydney NSW 2006</p> <p>2. <b>Project Title:</b> Towards resolving the refugee camp as campus paradox: The Praxis of Social Capital, Communities of Practice and Blended Learning in the Attainment of University Education by Burmese Refugees on the Thai-Burma Border.</p> <p>3. <b>HREC Approval No.:</b> 12576</p> <p>4. <b>Names of Students/Co-Investigators:</b> Jason Sargent</p> <p>5. <b>Project Description:</b> Please provide a one paragraph lay summary of your original project</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>This project explores how refugees on the Thai-Burma border have attained university-level education by participating in three education programs delivered by Australian Catholic University. The study looks at the experiences of the refugee students in these programs and the academics from ACU who delivered the courses. The study also investigates how a grassroots organisation such as the Melbourne Australia-based Refugee Tertiary Education Committee with a vision of refugee university education and the ACU as the operational actor has transitioned the vision to reality.</p> </div> <p>6. <b>Any previously approved minor amendments?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If YES, please briefly outline</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; margin-top: 10px;"></div> <p>7. <b>Nature of and reasons for amendment(s)</b> Please provide details of the changes you propose to make to the project and explain why they are necessary. Please justify any increase in sample size.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>It was intended to collect data from the ACU academic participant group and the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC) participant group by conducting face to face and telephone interviews. These methods and questions (including telephone scripts) were approved in the initial ethics application. Subsequently, some participants in these two groups have asked if they could provide data using an online questionnaire as they will be absent from their usual place of employment during the data collection phase of the project and cannot participate in face to face or telephone interviews. These</p> </div> <p>Modification Form</p>	

potential participants have indicated that they would be willing to provide data at their own time and convenience via an online questionnaire. The nature of this modification is to request to have the already approved interview questions also constructed into an online questionnaire. This would enable data collection from these 2 vital participant groups to occur using face to face, telephone and online questionnaire methods and facilitate the greatest number of participants providing information for the study.

8. Adding New Staff Member / Student / Research Assistant  Yes  No  
 If YES, provide the following (If more than one, please copy this page)

Name	
Title: (e.g: Mr, Ms, Dr, Associate Professor)	
Faculty/Department/School/Centre/Institution	
Address	
Telephone Number	
Fax Number	
Email Address	
Position (ie lecturer, PhD student)	
Qualifications (if PhD indicate field of study)	
Role in the project	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the new staff member received a copy of the approved application?	
Signature of new staff member	Signature  Print Name  _____ / _____ / _____ Date

9. Removing Staff Member / Student / Research Assistant  Yes  No  
 If YES, provide the following (If more than one, please copy this page)

Name	
Faculty/Department/School/Centre/Institution	
Position (ie lecturer, PhD student)	
Role in the project	
Date of Departure	_____ / _____ / _____

10. Possible inconveniences or risks to subjects:  Yes  No  
 If Yes, please outline any inconvenience or possible risks that the changes you propose may create for participants (eg changes to confidentiality provisions, physical or psychological risks, increased time commitments etc).

Modification Form

11. Actions to be taken by researchers to reduce risks:  Yes  No  
If Yes, please provide details of any additional actions and / or support that you will need to provide to participants as a result of the proposed changes.

N/A

12. Expected date of implementation of amendments to research:

Date: June 14, 2010

13. Time Extension  Yes  No  
If Yes, state new finishing date

Date:

14. Whether funding arrangements for the research been affected by the changes  Yes  No

15. Implications for compliance with legislative requirements:  Yes  No  
Please check current legislation and related requirements, if appropriate – including, for example Privacy Act 1998 (please refer to Guidelines under Section 95 of the Privacy Act produced by the NHMRC) and Children and Young Persons Act 1989.

16. Attach copies of amended surveys, questionnaires or interview questions  Yes  No

The questions remain the same as those which were previously approved.

17. Attach copies of the amended advertisement, participant information statement and consent form.  Yes  No  
Participants need to be advised of changes to procedures, time commitments, etc. You will need to update the participant information statement to reflect the changes

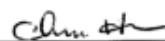
Modification Form

**18. Details of other permission or approvals required as a result of your proposed changes****19. Other Amendments**

If you require an additional title to be added to the HREC Database (Grant for application)

Title:

Granting Body:

**20. Declaration of Researchers**

Signature of Chief Investigator:

Date: 16/6/2010



Signature of Student/Co-Investigators:

Date: 1/6/2010

Signature of Student/Co-Investigators:

Date:

Signature of Student/Co-Investigators:

Date:

Signature of Student/Co-Investigators:

Date:

Signature of Head of Faculty/Department/School:

Date:

Modification Form

**ATTACHMENT A****Faculty of Education & Social Work**

ABN 15 211 513 464

**Dr Chun Hu**

Room 247  
 Building A35  
 University of Sydney NSW 2006  
 AUSTRALIA  
 Telephone: +61 2 9351 6339  
 Facsimile: +61 2 9036 5205  
 Email [chun.hu@sydney.edu.au](mailto:chun.hu@sydney.edu.au)  
 Web: [www.usyd.edu.au/](http://www.usyd.edu.au/)

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT FOR  
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY STAFF MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Research Project**

Title: Towards resolving the refugee camp as campus paradox: The Praxis of Social Capital, Communities of Practice and Blended Learning in the Attainment of University Education by Burmese Refugees on the Thai-Burma Border

**(1) What is the study about?**

This study explores the process of how Burmese refugees on the Thai-Burma border have been able to attain university education through programs delivered by the Australian Catholic University (ACU National). The study focuses on the Australian-based Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC) and the experiences of three groups of ACU National refugee students and the academics/ coordinators involved in three university programs (see Table 1) delivered by ACU National on the Border since 2003.

ACU National Education Program and/ or Qualification Awarded	Year
Karen Tertiary Education Pilot Project. Diploma in Business.	2003-2006
Certificate in Theology	2007- 2008
Diploma in Liberal Studies	2009- Present

**Table 1: Refugee University Education Programs on the Border since 2003.**

In particular the study seeks to discover how the RTEC as a grassroots organisation with a vision of university education for refugees located in refugee camps and ACU National as the operational actor have transitioned this vision to reality for refugees on the Border. The goal of the study is to identify implications and/ or strategies for the design of future refugee university education programs for delivery into worldwide locations of protracted refugee crises by members of the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) education community. By doing so, this study aims to contribute towards resolving the refugee camp as campus paradox.

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**(2) Who is carrying out the study?**

The study is being conducted by Jason Sargent and will form the basis for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy (Education)* at The University of Sydney under the supervision of Dr Chun Hu and Dr Elizabeth Cassity. Jason Sargent has been a member of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee since 2006.

**(3) What does the study involve?**

The study involves completing an online questionnaire for ACU academics involved in the Thai-Burma border programs.

**(4) How much time will the study take?**

The online questionnaire will take approximately thirty minutes to complete.

**(5) Can I withdraw from the study?**

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you are not under any obligation to consent to complete the questionnaire. Submitting a completed questionnaire is an indication of your consent to participate in the study. You can withdraw any time prior to submitting your completed questionnaire/survey. Once you have submitted your questionnaire anonymously, your responses cannot be withdrawn.

**(6) Will anyone else know the results?**

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants except as required by law. A report of the study will be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

**(7) Will the study benefit me?**

Implications and/ or strategies discovered in this study may be incorporated into the design of future refugee university education programs in universal locations of forced migration crisis.

**(8) Can I tell other people about the study?**

Yes, you may tell others about the study.

**(9) What if I require further information?**

When you have read this information, Jason Sargent will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Dr Chun Hu, CoCo Research Centre, Education Building, A35, Rm. 247, University of Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia, Tel.+612 9351 6339, [chun.hu@sydney.edu.au](mailto:chun.hu@sydney.edu.au) or Jason Sargent Tel. +613 8838 0214, [jason.sargent@sydney.edu.au](mailto:jason.sargent@sydney.edu.au)

**(10) What if I have a complaint or concerns?**

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Deputy Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or [ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au) (Email).

This information sheet is for you to keep

Modification Form



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

**Faculty of Education &  
Social Work**

ABN 15 211 513 464

**Dr Chun Hu**

Room 247  
Building A35  
University of Sydney NSW 2006  
AUSTRALIA  
Telephone: +61 2 9351 6339  
Facsimile: +61 2 9036 5205  
Email [chun.hu@sydney.edu.au](mailto:chun.hu@sydney.edu.au)  
Web: [www.usyd.edu.au/](http://www.usyd.edu.au/)

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT FOR  
REFUGEE TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Research Project**

Title: Towards resolving the refugee camp as campus paradox: The Praxis of Social Capital, Communities of Practice and Blended Learning in the Attainment of University Education by Burmese Refugees on the Thai-Burma Border

**(1) What is the study about?**

This study explores the process of how Burmese refugees on the Thai-Burma border have been able to attain university education through programs delivered by the Australian Catholic University (ACU National). The study focuses on the Australian-based Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC) and the experiences of three groups of ACU National refugee students and the academics/ coordinators involved in three university programs (see Table 1) delivered by ACU National on the Border since 2003.

ACU National Education Program and/ or Qualification Awarded	Year
Karen Tertiary Education Pilot Project. Diploma in Business.	2003-2006
Certificate in Theology	2007- 2008
Diploma in Liberal Studies	2009- Present

**Table 2: Refugee University Education Programs on the Border since 2003.**

In particular the study seeks to discover how the RTEC as a grassroots organisation with a vision of university education for refugees located in refugee camps and ACU National as the operational actor have transitioned this vision to reality for refugees on the Border. The goal of the study is to identify implications and/ or strategies for the design of future refugee university education programs for delivery into worldwide locations of protracted refugee crises by members of the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) education community. By doing so, this study aims to contribute towards resolving the refugee camp as campus paradox.

**(2) Who is carrying out the study?**

Modification Form

The study is being conducted by Jason Sargent and will form the basis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Education) at The University of Sydney under the supervision of Dr Chun Hu and Dr Elizabeth Cassilly. Jason Sargent has been a member of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee since 2006.

**(3) What does the study involve?**

The study involves completing an online questionnaire for Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC) members.

**(4) How much time will the study take?**

The online questionnaire will take approximately forty-five minutes to complete.

**(5) Can I withdraw from the study?**

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you are not under any obligation to consent to complete the questionnaire. Submitting a completed questionnaire is an indication of your consent to participate in the study. You can withdraw any time prior to submitting your completed questionnaire/survey. Once you have submitted your questionnaire anonymously, your responses cannot be withdrawn.

**(6) Will anyone else know the results?**

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants except as required by law. A report of the study will be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

**(7) Will the study benefit me?**

Implications and/ or strategies discovered in this study may be incorporated into the design of future refugee university education programs in universal locations of forced migration crisis.

**(8) Can I tell other people about the study?**

Yes, you may tell others about the study.

**(9) What if I require further information?**

When you have read this information, Jason Sargent will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Dr Chun Hu, CoCo Research Centre, Education Building, A35, Rm. 247, University of Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia, Tel.+61 9351 6339, [chun.hu@sydney.edu.au](mailto:chun.hu@sydney.edu.au) or Jason Sargent Tel. +613 8838 0214, [jason.sargent@sydney.edu.au](mailto:jason.sargent@sydney.edu.au)

**(10) What if I have a complaint or concerns?**

**Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Deputy Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or [ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au) (Email).**

This information sheet is for you to keep

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**APPENDIX B: Permission Letter to Interview RTEC Members**

**Jesuit Theological College**

175 Royal Parade, Parkville, Vic 3052 Australia  
Phone +61 3 9341 5800

E-mail [smithm@mira.net](mailto:smithm@mira.net) Web-site [www.jtc.edu.au](http://www.jtc.edu.au)

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2010

Ethics Committee  
University of Sydney  
NEW SOUTH WALES 2006

To whom it may concern,

This letter gives **Jason Sargent** — a PhD Candidate in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney — permission to interview fellow members of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee at Jesuit Theological College in Melbourne.

I am both the Rector of Jesuit Theological College and the Convenor of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee. I am fully aware of Jason's doctoral research and I wholeheartedly support him in this undertaking, which I believe will make a much-needed contribution to the provision of tertiary education for refugees.

I would be more than happy to speak with you on the phone about Jason and his research if that would help.

Yours sincerely,

Revd Dr Michael Smith SJ  
Rector

***APPENDIX C: Refugee Student Interview Schedule*****Introduction**

1. What is your name?
2. Which refugee camp are you based at?
  - (a) Mae La
  - (b) Umpiem Mai
  - (c) Other: Please list \_\_\_\_\_
3. How long have you been a refugee on the Border?
  - (a) Less than 1 year
  - (b) Between 1 and 5 years
  - (c) Between 5 and 10 years
  - (d) More than 10 years
4. What is the highest level of education you attained in your home country?
  - (a) Diploma
  - (b) Degree
  - (c) Masters
  - (d) Doctorate
  - (e) Other: please list \_\_\_\_\_
5. Are you aware of the work of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee?

**Higher learning for refugees**

6. Do you know of any other higher education programs for refugees in other parts of the world?
7. Why do you think there are so few opportunities for refugees to receive higher education on the Thai-Burma Border and in refugee camps around the world?

8. How could this situation be improved so that more refugees around the world were able to receive higher education?

### **Higher learning for refugees on the Thai-Burma Border**

9. Have you participated in previous Australian Catholic University Border programs?

- (a) Diploma in Business
- (b) Certificate in Theology

10. How did you find out about the Australian Catholic University (ACU) Border program/s?

11. How did you feel when you first heard of an opportunity to study higher education higher on the ACU Border programs?

### **Blended Learning**

12. In this study, the term ‘blended learning’ is defined as “the combination of e-learning and face-to-face (f2f) learning activity”.

- (a) Are you aware of the term?
- (b) What do you consider this term to mean?

13. Can you describe how e-learning works in the ACU Border program in which you are involved in by giving example of the processes involved?

14. Can you describe how face-to-face learning works in the ACU Border program in which you are involved in by giving example of the processes involved?

15. How can blended learning in the ACU Border programs be improved?

### **Social Capital**

16. Is trust important in relationships between you, your fellow students and teachers?
17. Has the level of trust developed over time in relationships between you, your fellow students and teachers?
  - (a) Could you give an example?
18. Has trusting your fellow students and teachers helped you during your learning in the ACU Border programs?
19. Reciprocity means “to give and take”. How important is being able to give and take to you in learning in the ACU Border programs (submitting assignments etc.)?
20. Do you believe the teachers and tutors understand the difficulties of being a refugee student in the ACU Border programs?

### **Communities of Practice**

21. A community of practice is defined as “a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly”. Are you aware of this term?
22. Would you consider your class of refugee students to be a community of practice?
  - (a) If yes, please explain why.
23. Did you have shared routines, stories of how you did things and styles in the way you did things as a group of refugee students?
  - (a) If yes, could you provide any examples?

### **Conclusion**

24. How has being involved in the ACU programs on the Border changed your life?

25. What is the most important part of participating in higher education courses for you? (The qualification gained, the formation of friendships between you, fellow students OR teachers and tutors or a combination of these)?
26. What do you hope to do with the qualifications you will gain from participating in the ACU Border programs? (More learning, teaching, use qualifications to assist in moving to a new country?)
27. Do you have any other comments?

***APPENDIX D: RTEC Member Interview Schedule*****Introduction**

1. How long have you been a member of the RTEC?
2. How did you come to be a member of the RTEC?
3. Were you introduced to the work of the committee by a committee member?
4. Do you have a defined role on the committee?
5. How would you describe the purpose of the committee?
6. Do you believe the work of the RTEC is in championing and facilitating university education for refugees in locations of protracted forced migration crisis?

**Higher learning for refugees**

7. Are you aware that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights proclaim the right of an individual to the access of merit-based higher education and that this right is also afforded to refugees through the 1951 UN Refugee Convention?
8. Apart from the Australian Catholic University (ACU) programs on the Thai-Burma Border, are you aware of any other higher education programs around the world for refugees who are registered in refugee camps?
9. What are the factors which you feel are constraining the delivery of university education to refugees registered in refugee camps around the world?
10. How could these constraints be addressed to enable more programs of university education to refugees registered in refugee camps around the world?

**Higher learning for refugees on the Thai-Burma Border**

11. Have you visited the Thai-Burma Border to witness the ACU programs?

- (a) If yes, how many times have you visited the Border?
- (b) How long did you spend on the Border?
- (c) Did you witness students studying?
- (d) Do you recall what the refugee students were studying?
- (e) Could you describe the learning environment?

12. What were your impressions of the level of enthusiasm shown by the refugee students participating in the ACU Border programs?

**Social Capital**

13. Do you believe trust is implied in the relationships between members of the RTEC?

14. On a scale of 1 to 3 where 1 = very important, 2 = important and 3 = not important, how important do you believe trust is in relationships between the RTEC members and between the RTEC and collaborating partners?

15. Can you explain why you believe trust in relationships between the RTEC members and between the RTEC and collaborating partners has this level of importance?

- (a) Can you provide an example of how trust has facilitated the work of the RTEC?

16. Reciprocity means “to give and take”. How important is giving and taking to the effective working of the RTEC and between the RTEC and collaborating partners?

- (a) Can you provide an example?

## Communities of Practice

17. A community of practice is defined as “group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly”.

(a) Are you aware of this term?

18. Would you consider the RTEC as being a community of practice?

(a) If not, why not?

19. Do you consider members understand the RTEC well enough to be able to contribute effectively to the committee?

(a) If not, how can the understanding of the committee by these members be improved?

20. Do you consider members are able to engage (interact) with the committee and be trusted as a partner in these engagements (interactions)?

(a) If not, how can the engagement (interactions) of these members with the committee and the level of trust in these interactions be improved?

21. Another characteristic of members of a community of practice is that they have a ‘shared repertoire’ such as having a shared language, routines, stories and styles. Do you consider there to be a shared repertoire amongst members of the RTEC?

(a) If yes, could you provide any examples?

22. How important to the effective working of the RTEC is it that members be given access to any shared repertoire?

## Conclusion

23. What do you consider as the reason/s why university education for refugees on the Border has occurred?
24. How significant has being involved in the work of the RTEC been to you?
25. Do you have any other comments?

***APPENDIX E: ACU Academic Interview Schedule*****Introduction**

1. What is your occupation?
2. Are you aware of the work of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee (RTEC)?
  - (a) How?

**Higher learning for refugees**

3. Are you aware that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights proclaim the right of an individual to the access of merit-based higher education and that this right is also afforded to refugees through the 1951 UN Refugee Convention?
4. Apart from the Australian Catholic University (ACU) programs on the Thai-Burma Border, are you aware of any other higher education programs around the world for refugees who are registered in refugee camps?
5. What are the factors which you feel are constraining the delivery of university education to refugees registered in refugee camps around the world?
6. How could these constraints be addressed to enable more programs of university education to refugees registered in refugee camps around the world?

**Higher learning for refugees on the Thai-Burma Border**

7. How did you come to be involved in the ACU Border programs?
8. Can you describe your role in the ACU Border programs?

9. What were your impressions of the learning environment and the availability of resources for the refugee students on the Border?

10. What were your impressions of the level of enthusiasm shown by the refugee students participating in the Border programs?

### **Blended Learning**

11. In this study, the term ‘blended learning’ is defined as “the combination of e-learning and face-to-face (f2f) learning activity”.

(a) Are you aware of the term?

(b) What do you consider this term to mean?

12. Can you describe how each part of the blend (e-learning and face-to-face) worked in the ACU Border program in which you were involved in delivering by giving example of the processes involved?

13. Please describe the advantages and disadvantages of each part of the blend (e-learning and face-to-face).

14. What was the ratio of blend (e-learning: face-to-face) used in the ACU Border program in which you were involved in delivering?

15. How can blended learning in the ACU Border programs be improved?

### **Social Capital**

16. On a scale of 1 to 3 where 1 = very important, 2 = important and 3 = not important, how important do you believe trust is in relationships between course coordinators, teachers and tutors who deliver the ACU Border programs and between them and the refugee students?

17. Can you explain why you believe trust in relationships between course coordinators, teachers and tutors who deliver the ACU Border programs and between them and the refugee students has this level of importance?

18. Can you provide an example of how trust has facilitated the work of course coordinators, teachers and tutors who deliver the ACU Border programs and between them and the refugee students?

19. Did levels of trust develop over time?

(a) Can you provide any examples of how levels of trust developed over time?

20. Reciprocity means “to give and take”. How important is giving and taking to the effective working of the group of course coordinators, teachers and tutors who deliver the ACU Border programs and between them and the refugee students?

(a) Can you provide an example?

### **Communities of Practice**

21. A community of practice is defined as “group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly”.

(a) Are you aware of this term?

22. Would you consider you and your colleagues who teach/have taught in the ACU Border programs as being a community of practice?

(a) If not, why not?

23. Another characteristic of members of a community of practice is that they have a ‘shared repertoire’ such as having a shared language, routines, stories and styles. Do

you consider there to be a shared repertoire amongst you and your colleagues who teach/have taught in the ACU Border programs?

(a) If yes, could you provide any examples?

24. How important to the effective delivery of the ACU Border education programs is it that academics be given access to any shared repertoire?

### **Conclusion**

25. How significant has being involved in delivering higher learning to refugees on the Border been to you?

26. What do you consider as the reason/s why university education for refugees on the Border has occurred?

27. Do you have any other comments?

***APPENDIX F: Policy-makers and Practitioners Online Questionnaire******Schedule***

1. Which of the following best describes the type of organisation you presently work for?

- (a) Local NGO on the Thai-Burma Border
- (b) International NGO working on the Border
- (c) UNHCR
- (d) UNESCO
- (e) Other: please describe the type of organisation\_\_\_\_\_

2. Please indicate the level of experience you have working with refugees

- (a) Less than 1 year
- (b) Between 1 and 5 years
- (c) Between 5 and 10 years
- (d) More than 10 years

3. Are you aware of the work of the Melbourne, Australia based Refugee Tertiary Education Committee?

- (a) No
- (b) Yes. If yes, how are you aware of the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee?
  - i) Informed from a colleague about the Committee
  - ii) From conference presentations
  - iii) From viewing the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee website
  - iv) Other: please describe \_\_\_\_\_

4. Are you aware of the higher education programs provided to refugees on the Thai-Burma Border by Australian Catholic University (ACU)?

(a) No

(b) Yes. If yes, how are you aware of the programs provided to refugees on the Thai-Burma border by ACU?

- i) Personally witnessed these programs on the Border
- ii) Informed from a colleague about these programs
- iii) From conference presentations
- iv) From viewing the Refugee Tertiary Education Committee website
- v) Other: please describe \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are you aware of higher education programs delivered to refugees in locations of forced migration crises in other parts of the world besides the Thai-Burma border?

(a) No

(b) Yes: please indicate the programs and countries  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Please rank in order of significance (where 1 = most significant and 8 = least significant) the following barriers you believe are constraining the deployment of higher education programs to refugees, delivered in locations of forced migration crisis?

- Funding
- Mobility of refugees
- Lack of suitably qualified refugee students
- Lack of willing tertiary education institutions
- Lack of guidelines
- Security issues
- Political issues
- Technical issues

— Other: please describe \_\_\_\_\_

7. How can any barriers identified in Question 6 be overcome? Please describe:

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8. Which of the following in your consideration is the most beneficial outcome of accredited higher education for refugees in locations of forced migration crisis?

- (a) Gaining of recognised qualifications by refugees
- (b) Social interaction between refugees and teachers and/or refugees and other students
- (c) Other: please describe:

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9. Do you have any other comments on the topic of higher education for refugees in locations of forced migration crises?

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***APPENDIX G: 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status  
of Refugees***

Adopted on 28 July 1951 by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons convened under General Assembly resolution 429 (V) of 14 December 1950.

Entry into force: 22 April 1954, in accordance with article 43

**Preamble**

The High Contracting Parties,

Considering that the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved on 10 December 1948 by the General Assembly have affirmed the principle that human beings shall enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms without discrimination,

Considering that the United Nations has, on various occasions, manifested its profound concern for refugees and endeavoured to assure refugees the widest possible exercise of these fundamental rights and freedoms,

Considering that it is desirable to revise and consolidate previous international agreements relating to the status of refugees and to extend the scope of and the protection accorded by such instruments by means of a new agreement,

Considering that the grant of asylum may place unduly heavy burdens on certain countries, and that a satisfactory solution of a problem of which the United Nations has recognized the international scope and nature cannot therefore be achieved without international co-operation,

Expressing the wish that all States, recognizing the social and humanitarian nature of the problem of refugees, will do everything within their power to prevent this problem from becoming a cause of tension between States,

Noting that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is charged with the task of supervising international conventions providing for the protection of refugees, and recognizing that the effective co-ordination of measures taken to deal with this problem will depend upon the co-operation of States with the High Commissioner,

Have agreed as follows:

## **Chapter I**

### **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **Article 1. - Definition of the term "refugee"**

A. For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "refugee" shall apply to any person who:

(1) Has been considered a refugee under the Arrangements of 12 May 1926 and 30 June 1928 or under the Conventions of 28 October 1933 and 10 February 1938, the Protocol of 14 September 1939 or the Constitution of the International Refugee Organization;

Decisions of non-eligibility taken by the International Refugee Organization during the period of its activities shall not prevent the status of refugee being accorded to persons who fulfil the conditions of paragraph 2 of this section;

(2) As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and

is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

In the case of a person who has more than one nationality, the term "the country of his nationality" shall mean each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of his nationality if, without any valid reason based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of one of the countries of which he is a national.

B. (1) For the purposes of this Convention, the words "events occurring before 1 January 1951" in article 1, section A, shall be understood to mean either ( a ) "events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951"; or ( b ) "events occurring in Europe or elsewhere before 1 January 1951"; and each Contracting State shall make a declaration at the time of signature, ratification or accession, specifying which of these meanings it applies for the purpose of its obligations under this Convention.

(2) Any Contracting State which has adopted alternative ( a ) may at any time extend its obligations by adopting alternative ( b ) by means of a notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

C. This Convention shall cease to apply to any person falling under the terms of section A if:

- (1) He has voluntarily re-availed himself of the protection of the country of his nationality; or
- (2) Having lost his nationality, he has voluntarily reacquired it; or
- (3) He has acquired a new nationality, and enjoys the protection of the country of his new nationality; or

(4) He has voluntarily re-established himself in the country which he left or outside which he remained owing to fear of persecution; or

(5) He can no longer, because the circumstances in connection with which he has been recognized as a refugee have ceased to exist, continue to refuse to avail himself of the protection of the country of his nationality;

Provided that this paragraph shall not apply to a refugee falling under section A (1) of this article who is able to invoke compelling reasons arising out of previous persecution for refusing to avail himself of the protection of the country of nationality;

(6) Being a person who has no nationality he is, because the circumstances in connection with which he has been recognized as a refugee have ceased to exist, able to return to the country of his former habitual residence;

Provided that this paragraph shall not apply to a refugee falling under section A (1) of this article who is able to invoke compelling reasons arising out of previous persecution for refusing to return to the country of his former habitual residence.

D. This Convention shall not apply to persons who are at present receiving from organs or agencies of the United Nations other than the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees protection or assistance.

When such protection or assistance has ceased for any reason, without the position of such persons being definitively settled in accordance with the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, these persons shall ipso facto be entitled to the benefits of this Convention.

E. This Convention shall not apply to a person who is recognized by the competent authorities of the country in which he has taken residence as having the rights and obligations which are attached to the possession of the nationality of that country.

F. The provisions of this Convention shall not apply to any person with respect to whom there are serious reasons for considering that:

- (a) He has committed a crime against peace, a war crime, or a crime against humanity, as defined in the international instruments drawn up to make provision in respect of such crimes;
- (b) He has committed a serious non-political crime outside the country of refuge prior to his admission to that country as a refugee;
- (c) He has been guilty of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

### **Article 2. - General obligations**

Every refugee has duties to the country in which he finds himself, which require in particular that he conform to its laws and regulations as well as to measures taken for the maintenance of public order.

### **Article 3. - Non-discrimination**

The Contracting States shall apply the provisions of this Convention to refugees without discrimination as to race, religion or country of origin.

### **Article 4. - Religion**

The Contracting States shall accord to refugees within their territories treatment at least as favourable as that accorded to their nationals with respect to freedom to practise their religion and freedom as regards the religious education of their children.

**Article 5. - Rights granted apart from this Convention**

Nothing in this Convention shall be deemed to impair any rights and benefits granted by a Contracting State to refugees apart from this Convention.

**Article 6. - The term "in the same circumstances"**

For the purposes of this Convention, the term "in the same circumstances" implies that any requirements (including requirements as to length and conditions of sojourn or residence) which the particular individual would have to fulfil for the enjoyment of the right in question, if he were not a refugee, must be fulfilled by him, with the exception of requirements which by their nature a refugee is incapable of fulfilling.

**Article 7. - Exemption from reciprocity**

1. Except where this Convention contains more favourable provisions, a Contracting State shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to aliens generally.
2. After a period of three years' residence, all refugees shall enjoy exemption from legislative reciprocity in the territory of the Contracting States.
3. Each Contracting State shall continue to accord to refugees the rights and benefits to which they were already entitled, in the absence of reciprocity, at the date of entry into force of this Convention for that State.
4. The Contracting States shall consider favourably the possibility of according to refugees, in the absence of reciprocity, rights and benefits beyond those to which they are entitled according to paragraphs 2 and 3, and to extending exemption from reciprocity to refugees who do not fulfil the conditions provided for in paragraphs 2 and 3.

5. The provisions of paragraphs 2 and 3 apply both to the rights and benefits referred to in articles 13, 18, 19, 21 and 22 of this Convention and to rights and benefits for which this Convention does not provide.

#### **Article 8. - Exemption from exceptional measures**

With regard to exceptional measures which may be taken against the person, property or interests of nationals of a foreign State, the Contracting States shall not apply such measures to a refugee who is formally a national of the said State solely on account of such nationality. Contracting States which, under their legislation, are prevented from applying the general principle expressed in this article, shall, in appropriate cases, grant exemptions in favour of such refugees.

#### **Article 9. - Provisional measures**

Nothing in this Convention shall prevent a Contracting State, in time of war or other grave and exceptional circumstances, from taking provisionally measures which it considers to be essential to the national security in the case of a particular person, pending a determination by the Contracting State that that person is in fact a refugee and that the continuance of such measures is necessary in his case in the interests of national security.

#### **Article 10. - Continuity of residence**

1. Where a refugee has been forcibly displaced during the Second World War and removed to the territory of a Contracting State, and is resident there, the period of such enforced sojourn shall be considered to have been lawful residence within that territory.

2. Where a refugee has been forcibly displaced during the Second World War from the territory of a Contracting State and has, prior to the date of entry into force of this Convention, returned there for the purpose of taking up residence, the period of residence before and after such enforced displacement shall be regarded as one uninterrupted period for any purposes for which uninterrupted residence is required.

### **Article 11. - Refugee seamen**

In the case of refugees regularly serving as crew members on board a ship flying the flag of a Contracting State, that State shall give sympathetic consideration to their establishment on its territory and the issue of travel documents to them or their temporary admission to its territory particularly with a view to facilitating their establishment in another country.

## **Chapter II**

### **JURIDICAL STATUS**

#### **Article 12. - Personal status**

1. The personal status of a refugee shall be governed by the law of the country of his domicile or, if he has no domicile, by the law of the country of his residence.
2. Rights previously acquired by a refugee and dependent on personal status, more particularly rights attaching to marriage, shall be respected by a Contracting State, subject to compliance, if this be necessary, with the formalities required by the law of that State, provided that the right in question is one which would have been recognized by the law of that State had he not become a refugee.

**Article 13. - Movable and immovable property**

The Contracting States shall accord to a refugee treatment as favourable as possible and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, as regards the acquisition of movable and immovable property and other rights pertaining thereto, and to leases and other contracts relating to movable and immovable property.

**Article 14. - Artistic rights and industrial property**

In respect of the protection of industrial property, such as inventions, designs or models, trade marks, trade names, and of rights in literary, artistic and scientific works, a refugee shall be accorded in the country in which he has his habitual residence the same protection as is accorded to nationals of that country. In the territory of any other Contracting States, he shall be accorded the same protection as is accorded in that territory to nationals of the country in which he has his habitual residence.

**Article 15. - Right of association**

As regards non-political and non-profit-making associations and trade unions the Contracting States shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country, in the same circumstances.

**Article 16. - Access to courts**

1. A refugee shall have free access to the courts of law on the territory of all Contracting States.

2. A refugee shall enjoy in the Contracting State in which he has his habitual residence the same treatment as a national in matters pertaining to access to the courts, including legal assistance and exemption from *cautio judicatum solvi*.
3. A refugee shall be accorded in the matters referred to in paragraph 2 in countries other than that in which he has his habitual residence the treatment granted to a national of the country of his habitual residence.

### **Chapter III**

#### **GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT**

##### **Article 17. - Wage-earning employment**

1. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country in the same circumstances, as regards the right to engage in wage-earning employment.
2. In any case, restrictive measures imposed on aliens or the employment of aliens for the protection of the national labour market shall not be applied to a refugee who was already exempt from them at the date of entry into force of this Convention for the Contracting State concerned, or who fulfils one of the following conditions:
  - (a) He has completed three years' residence in the country;
  - (b) He has a spouse possessing the nationality of the country of residence. A refugee may not invoke the benefit of this provision if he has abandoned his spouse;
  - (c) He has one or more children possessing the nationality of the country of residence.
3. The Contracting States shall give sympathetic consideration to assimilating the rights of all refugees with regard to wage-earning employment to those of nationals,

and in particular of those refugees who have entered their territory pursuant to programmes of labour recruitment or under immigration schemes.

### **Article 18. - Self-employment**

The Contracting States shall accord to a refugee lawfully in their territory treatment as favourable as possible and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, as regards the right to engage on his own account in agriculture, industry, handicrafts and commerce and to establish commercial and industrial companies.

### **Article 19. - Liberal professions**

1. Each Contracting State shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory who hold diplomas recognized by the competent authorities of that State, and who are desirous of practising a liberal profession, treatment as favourable as possible and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances.
2. The Contracting States shall use their best endeavours consistently with their laws and constitutions to secure the settlement of such refugees in the territories, other than the metropolitan territory, for whose international relations they are responsible.

**Chapter IV****WELFARE****Article 20. - Rationing**

Where a rationing system exists, which applies to the population at large and regulates the general distribution of products in short supply, refugees shall be accorded the same treatment as nationals.

**Article 21. - Housing**

As regards housing, the Contracting States, in so far as the matter is regulated by laws or regulations or is subject to the control of public authorities, shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory treatment as favourable as possible and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances.

**Article 22. - Public education**

1. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education.
2. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees treatment as favourable as possible, and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, with respect to education other than elementary education and, in particular, as regards access to studies, the recognition of foreign school Certificates, diplomas and degrees, the remission of fees and charges and the award of scholarships.

**Article 23. - Public relief**

The Contracting States shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory the same treatment with respect to public relief and assistance as is accorded to their nationals.

**Article 24. - Labour legislation and social security**

1. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory the same treatment as is accorded to nationals in respect of the following matters;

(a) In so far as such matters are governed by laws or regulations or are subject to the control of administrative authorities: remuneration, including family allowances where these form part of remuneration, hours of work, overtime arrangements, holidays with pay, restrictions on work, minimum age of employment, apprenticeship and training, women's work and the work of young persons, and the enjoyment of the benefits of collective bargaining;

(b) Social security (legal provisions in respect of employment injury, occupational diseases, maternity, sickness, disability, old age, death, unemployment, family responsibilities and any other contingency which, according to national laws or regulations, is covered by a social security scheme), subject to the following limitations:

(i) There may be appropriate arrangements for the maintenance of acquired rights and rights in course of acquisition;

(ii) National laws or regulations of the country of residence may prescribe special arrangements concerning benefits or portions of benefits which are payable wholly out of public funds, and concerning allowances paid to persons who do not fulfil the contribution conditions prescribed for the award of a normal pension.

2. The right to compensation for the death of a refugee resulting from employment injury or from occupational disease shall not be affected by the fact that the residence of the beneficiary is outside the territory of the Contracting State.
3. The Contracting States shall extend to refugees the benefits of agreements concluded between them, or which may be concluded between them in the future, concerning the maintenance of acquired rights and rights in the process of acquisition in regard to social security, subject only to the conditions which apply to nationals of the States signatory to the agreements in question.
4. The Contracting States will give sympathetic consideration to extending to refugees so far as possible the benefits of similar agreements which may at any time be in force between such Contracting States and non-contracting States.

## **Chapter V**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES**

#### **Article 25. - Administrative assistance**

1. When the exercise of a right by a refugee would normally require the assistance of authorities of a foreign country to whom he cannot have recourse, the Contracting States in whose territory he is residing shall arrange that such assistance be afforded to him by their own authorities or by an international authority.
2. The authority or authorities mentioned in paragraph 1 shall deliver or cause to be delivered under their supervision to refugees such documents or certifications as would normally be delivered to aliens by or through their national authorities.

3. Documents or certifications so delivered shall stand in the stead of the official instruments delivered to aliens by or through their national authorities, and shall be given credence in the absence of proof to the contrary.
4. Subject to such exceptional treatment as may be granted to indigent persons, fees may be charged for the services mentioned herein, but such fees shall be moderate and commensurate with those charged to nationals for similar services.
5. The provisions of this article shall be without prejudice to articles 27 and 28.

### **Article 26. - Freedom of movement**

Each Contracting State shall accord to refugees lawfully in its territory the right to choose their place of residence and to move freely within its territory subject to any regulations applicable to aliens generally in the same circumstances.

### **Article 27. - Identity papers**

The Contracting States shall issue identity papers to any refugee in their territory who does not possess a valid travel document.

### **Article 28. - Travel documents**

1. The Contracting States shall issue to refugees lawfully staying in their territory travel documents for the purpose of travel outside their territory, unless compelling reasons of national security or public order otherwise require, and the provisions of the Schedule to this Convention shall apply with respect to such documents. The Contracting States may issue such a travel document to any other refugee in their territory; they shall in particular give sympathetic consideration to the issue of such a

travel document to refugees in their territory who are unable to obtain a travel document from the country of their lawful residence.

2. Travel documents issued to refugees under previous international agreements by Parties thereto shall be recognized and treated by the Contracting States in the same way as if they had been issued pursuant to this article.

### **Article 29. - Fiscal charges**

1. The Contracting States shall not impose upon refugees duties, charges or taxes, of any description whatsoever, other or higher than those which are or may be levied on their nationals in similar situations.
2. Nothing in the above paragraph shall prevent the application to refugees of the laws and regulations concerning charges in respect of the issue to aliens of administrative documents including identity papers.

### **Article 30. - Transfer of assets**

1. A Contracting State shall, in conformity with its laws and regulations, permit refugees to transfer assets which they have brought into its territory, to another country where they have been admitted for the purposes of resettlement.
2. A Contracting State shall give sympathetic consideration to the application of refugees for permission to transfer assets wherever they may be and which are necessary for their resettlement in another country to which they have been admitted.

### **Article 31. - Refugees unlawfully in the country of refuge**

1. The Contracting States shall not impose penalties, on account of their illegal entry or presence, on refugees who, coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom

was threatened in the sense of article 1, enter or are present in their territory without authorization, provided they present themselves without delay to the authorities and show good cause for their illegal entry or presence.

2. The Contracting States shall not apply to the movements of such refugees restrictions other than those which are necessary and such restrictions shall only be applied until their status in the country is regularized or they obtain admission into another country. The Contracting States shall allow such refugees a reasonable period and all the necessary facilities to obtain admission into another country.

### **Article 32. - Expulsion**

1. The Contracting States shall not expel a refugee lawfully in their territory save on grounds of national security or public order.

2. The expulsion of such a refugee shall be only in pursuance of a decision reached in accordance with due process of law. Except where compelling reasons of national security otherwise require, the refugee shall be allowed to submit evidence to clear himself, and to appeal to and be represented for the purpose before competent authority or a person or persons specially designated by the competent authority.

3. The Contracting States shall allow such a refugee a reasonable period within which to seek legal admission into another country. The Contracting States reserve the right to apply during that period such internal measures as they may deem necessary.

### **Article 33. - Prohibition of expulsion or return ("refoulement")**

1. No Contracting State shall expel or return (" refouler ") a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened

on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

2. The benefit of the present provision may not, however, be claimed by a refugee whom there are reasonable grounds for regarding as a danger to the security of the country in which he is, or who, having been convicted by a final judgement of a particularly serious crime, constitutes a danger to the community of that country.

#### **Article 34. - Naturalization**

The Contracting States shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees. They shall in particular make every effort to expedite naturalization proceedings and to reduce as far as possible the charges and costs of such proceedings.

### **Chapter VI**

#### **EXECUTORY AND TRANSITORY PROVISIONS**

#### **Article 35. - Co-operation of the national authorities with the United Nations**

1. The Contracting States undertake to co-operate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or any other agency of the United Nations which may succeed it, in the exercise of its functions, and shall in particular facilitate its duty of supervising the application of the provisions of this Convention.

2. In order to enable the Office of the High Commissioner or any other agency of the United Nations which may succeed it, to make reports to the competent organs of the United Nations, the Contracting States undertake to provide them in the appropriate form with information and statistical data requested concerning:

- (a) The condition of refugees,
- (b) The implementation of this Convention, and
- (c) Laws, regulations and decrees which are, or may hereafter be, in force relating to refugees.

#### **Article 36. - Information on national legislation**

The Contracting States shall communicate to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the laws and regulations which they may adopt to ensure the application of this Convention.

#### **Article 37. - Relation to previous conventions**

Without prejudice to article 28, paragraph 2, of this Convention, this Convention replaces, as between Parties to it, the Arrangements of 5 July 1922, 31 May 1924, 12 May 1926, 30 June 1928 and 30 July 1935, the Conventions of 28 October 1933 and 10 February 1938, the Protocol of 14 September 1939 and the Agreement of 15 October 1946.

### **Chapter VII**

#### **FINAL CLAUSES**

#### **Article 38. - Settlement of disputes**

Any dispute between Parties to this Convention relating to its interpretation or application, which cannot be settled by other means, shall be referred to the International Court of Justice at the request of any one of the parties to the dispute.

**Article 39. - Signature, ratification and accession**

1. This Convention shall be opened for signature at Geneva on 28 July 1951 and shall thereafter be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It shall be open for signature at the European Office of the United Nations from 28 July to 31 August 1951 and shall be re-opened for signature at the Headquarters of the United Nations from 17 September 1951 to 31 December 1952.
2. This Convention shall be open for signature on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations, and also on behalf of any other State invited to attend the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons or to which an invitation to sign will have been addressed by the General Assembly. It shall be ratified and the instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
3. This Convention shall be open from 28 July 1951 for accession by the States referred to in paragraph 2 of this article. Accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of accession with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

**Article 40. - Territorial application clause**

1. Any State may, at the time of signature, ratification or accession, declare that this Convention shall extend to all or any of the territories for the international relations of which it is responsible. Such a declaration shall take effect when the Convention enters into force for the State concerned.
2. At any time thereafter any such extension shall be made by notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and shall take effect as from the ninetieth day after the day of receipt by the Secretary-General of the United Nations of this

notification, or as from the date of entry into force of the Convention for the State concerned, whichever is the later.

3. With respect to those territories to which this Convention is not extended at the time of signature, ratification or accession, each State concerned shall consider the possibility of taking the necessary steps in order to extend the application of this Convention to such territories, subject, where necessary for constitutional reasons, to the consent of the Governments of such territories.

#### **Article 41. - Federal clause**

In the case of a Federal or non-unitary State, the following provisions shall apply:

- (a) With respect to those articles of this Convention that come within the legislative jurisdiction of the federal legislative authority, the obligations of the Federal Government shall to this extent be the same as those of parties which are not Federal States;
- (b) With respect to those articles of this Convention that come within the legislative jurisdiction of constituent States, provinces or cantons which are not, under the constitutional system of the Federation, bound to take legislative action, the Federal Government shall bring such articles with a favourable recommendation to the notice of the appropriate authorities of States, provinces or cantons at the earliest possible moment;
- (c) A Federal State Party to this Convention shall, at the request of any other Contracting State transmitted through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, supply a statement of the law and practice of the Federation and its constituent units in regard to any particular provision of the Convention showing the extent to which effect has been given to that provision by legislative or other action.

**Article 42. - Reservations**

1. At the time of signature, ratification or accession, any State may make reservations to articles of the Convention other than to articles 1, 3, 4, 16 (1), 33, 36-46 inclusive.
2. Any State making a reservation in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article may at any time withdraw the reservation by a communication to that effect addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

**Article 43. - Entry into force**

1. This Convention shall come into force on the ninetieth day following the day of deposit of the sixth instrument of ratification or accession.
2. For each State ratifying or acceding to the Convention after the deposit of the sixth instrument of ratification or accession, the Convention shall enter into force on the ninetieth day following the date of deposit by such State of its instrument of ratification or accession.

**Article 44. - Denunciation**

1. Any Contracting State may denounce this Convention at any time by a notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
2. Such denunciation shall take effect for the Contracting State concerned one year from the date upon which it is received by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
3. Any State which has made a declaration or notification under article 40 may, at any time thereafter, by a notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations,

declare that the Convention shall cease to extend to such territory one year after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary-General.

#### **Article 45. - Revision**

1. Any Contracting State may request revision of this Convention at any time by a notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
2. The General Assembly of the United Nations shall recommend the steps, if any, to be taken in respect of such request.

#### **Article 46. - Notifications by the Secretary-General of the United Nations**

The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall inform all Members of the United Nations and non-member States referred to in article 39:

- (a) Of declarations and notifications in accordance with section B of article 1;
- (b) Of signatures, ratifications and accessions in accordance with article 39;
- (c) Of declarations and notifications in accordance with article 40;
- (d) Of reservations and withdrawals in accordance with article 42;
- (e) Of the date on which this Convention will come into force in accordance with article 43;
- (f) Of denunciations and notifications in accordance with article 44;
- (g) Of requests for revision in accordance with article 45.

In faith whereof the undersigned, duly authorized, have signed this Convention on behalf of their respective Governments.

Done at Geneva, this twenty-eighth day of July, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-one, in a single copy, of which the English and French texts are equally authentic and

which shall remain deposited in the archives of the United Nations, and certified true copies of which shall be delivered to all Members of the United Nations and to the non-member States referred to in article 39.

